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STATESMAN AND NATION

The Week-end Review

Vol. XXXVIII. No. 959. [Incorporating THE ATHENÆUM] SATURDAY, JULY 23, 1949 [Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper] SIXPENCE

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TWO RELIGIONS—TWO HERESIES

UNTIL now a concordat for Eastern Europe between the Kremlin and the Vatican has always seemed possible. Rome has not wished to add to the difficulties of the faithful behind the Iron Curtain. If the Pope has now reversed this prudent policy, he has been driven to do so by the birth of Catholic Action in Czechoslovakia and by signs that even west of the Iron Curtain the discipline and organisation of the Church might be completely disrupted by the growth of heresy within. It is the threat that Catholics might delude themselves into believing that they could remain sons of the Church and yet voluntarily accept Communism that has so greatly alarmed the Vatican.

The Pope has, however, distinguished between Catholics who, under great economic pressure, acquiesce in Communism; those who take jobs under Communists, not under compulsion but for personal advantage; and those who are open and avowed Communists. The first are to be pitied rather than condemned. The second are denied the Sacrament, but not excommunicated. The third group must, like the Albigensian and similar heresies in the past, be regarded as a diseased limb and amputated from the body of the Church. It will be noted that for the first time we have two totalitarian religious parties in competition. They are both willing to compromise for reasons of expediency, but, ultimately, both are absolute in their demands for spiritual and political obedience. The limit of Moscow's patience was reached in the case of Tito, who, like Henry VIII, has now founded what amounts to a national church in Yugoslavia; the limit of the Pope's patience has come with the appearance of a body of Catholics who support the abominable heresy that it is possible for a Catholic voluntarily to accept Communism.

It is too soon to judge the effects of the Vatican's decree. In Italy the formal observance of Catholicism is almost universal. In villages where Communism is also rife, the priests are likely—and there are already reports to that effect—to deal gently with peasants who will not repudiate an electoral allegiance to Communism. Amongst intellectuals, who in Italy probably form a higher proportion of "progressives" than anywhere else in Europe, the choice will be hard indeed. The comment of Luigi Salvatorelli in *La Stampa* on July 16 is significant. He points out that in Italy and Western Europe Communism does not at present demand from the worker acceptance of its ideology. It raises issues about "labour contracts, workers' organisations, land reform, and the Atlantic Pact."

> Many of those who give the Communists their votes do so because—it does not matter whether they are right or wrong in doing so—they are in agreement with them on particular questions. Are these included within the first sanction of the Holy Office? And, if so, is not their right of opposition reduced and almost entirely withdrawn? And there is more. In France and Italy, the Communist Party is the main representative of the working class. This is a fact which will not quickly change. What is the character of the decree of the Holy Office in face of such a situation?

And Signor Salvatorelli, himself a distinguished Liberal historian, asks whether, if the Vatican now denounces the Communist Party, there is any reason to believe that it will not soon denounce all other parties, except the Christian Democrats? After all, the most famous of all Papal Encyclicals pronounced anathema not only on Socialism and Communism, but on every form of Liberalism.

In Czechoslovakia, the Papal decree has immediately intensified the struggle. Priests who openly espouse it are warned by the Government that if they attempt to apply the Church's sanctions against the people of Czechoslovakia they will themselves be outlawed by the State. The battle will rage—we suspect without much advantage to the Church. A Czech Catholic is usually a Hussite at heart; he is not to be compared with his devout Austrian neighbour. In any case, the power of the State in countries where Communism has gained its hold is indeed difficult to shake. We recall the old discussion of the relative power of the Judge and the Bishop. One man held that the Bishop was the stronger because, whereas the Judge could say "You be hanged," the Bishop could say "You be damned." To this the other replied: "But if the Judge says, 'You shall be hanged,' you *are* hanged."

Port Employers and the Cabinet

The Cabinet's shocked repudiation of the National Dock Labour Board's "ultimatum" has provoked wide-spread perplexity and criticism. It is arguable that, in warning the dockers that "failure to return to work will jeopardise the very existence" of the whole dock labour scheme, the Board was out of court: as Mr. Isaacs said in the House, the scheme can only be revoked by legislation, for which the responsibility rests with the Government. But, after all, the Board was only repeating what the Minister of Labour himself had said three weeks ago. Did the decision to assure the dockers that, whatever the Board might say, there was no official intention of annulling the scheme, reflect simply fear on the Cabinet's part that "toughness" might result in the spreading of the stoppage to other ports? In that case, why have invoked the "tough" Emergency Regulations? It may be that the port employers jumped at what seemed like an opportunity of getting back to casual labour conditions in the docks, and that Mr. Bevin, the architect of the dock scheme, saw through this manœuvre. But, in that case, how was it that Mr. Isaacs came to be so ill-informed of the intended move? The episode, failing fuller explanation, points to a shocking lack of co-ordination between the various "authorities" at work. Mr. Attlee must make a clean breast of the whole affair.

Evil Necessity

With the total dollar deficit of the sterling area countries running at the rate of £600 millions a year, and with the central gold reserve down to £400 millions, it was clear that, in addition to the temporary standstill, immediate steps would have to be taken to check the dollar drain. The Chancellor's announcement, last week, that British imports from the dollar area would have to be brought down below the 1948 programme by 25 per cent. (representing, on paper, a cut of $400 millions) has been followed by the news that similar economies in dollar purchases have been agreed on by the conference of Commonwealth Finance Ministers. Canada, whose representative attended the meeting as an observer, has (as was to be expected) contracted out of the dollar cuts, and it is not clear to what extent South Africa, which is not a member of the sterling area dollar pool, is contributing to the austerity programme. Nevertheless, regarded as a short-term expedient, this policy of economising in dollar imports should relieve the strain on the gold reserve to the extent of at least $600 millions a year. No one, however, could suppose that this "evil necessity," as Sir Stafford called it, provides an ultimate solution. On the one hand, the resulting loss of export trade may aggravate to some extent the present U.S. recession; and, though the process of official stock-piling of selected, strategic commodities appears to have been resumed, the exclusion of American goods, however inevitable, must tend to discourage, rather than stimulate, private American purchases in markets abroad. On the other hand, though the Chancellor expressed the hope that the effect of the cuts could be mitigated by obtaining supplies of raw materials from other sources, he did not disguise the fact that the proposed economies would involve a substantial reduction in imports of U.S. timber, paper and pulp, as well as of steel and non-ferrous metals. It would be optimistic to imagine that these reductions will have no effect on the level of industrial employment.

Atomic Competition

Now that Britain, nominal partner in the Sacred Trust, has begun to compete with the U.S. in atomic energy development, an ironical situation has arisen. Indeed, judging by the President's emergency meeting attended by fifteen of the leading American atomic and military specialists, there is something like a crisis in Washington. The root of the matter is that Britain, which has been excluded, like everyone else, from the "know-how," has, three and a half years after the Truman-Attlee-Mackenzie King agreement, found the answers for itself. Independently, we have discovered how to refine uranium, operate an atomic pile, separate plutonium and overcome the metallurgical problems which were the "bugs" in large-scale development; we have, for all practical purposes, discovered the "secret," and are now in a position to go into business. That means that Britain is competing for uranium ores, the main source of which, for America, has been Belgian Congo, where Britain has a prior lien on supplies, and the current American-Belgian-British contract is due for renewal or revision. There are alternative supplies in the dollar bloc—at Great Bear Lake in Canada—but Canada and Britain have been working together, in default of U.S. assistance, and presumably Canada is now a potential competitor for its own supplies. So the Americans are now in a quandary. Can Congress be induced to let the other partners in the Sacred Trust know, what they probably already know, in case there is something they know that the Americans might not know? Or will it insist that the "secret" be kept and allow the others to set up in competition? Or will it, as one Congressman suggests, apply some kind of sanctions on the grounds that, if Britain is in a position to produce atomic bombs, it does not need Marshall Aid?

Back to Sweet Rationing

It is to be hoped that the gravity of the balance of payments situation will not be obscured in the public mind by the inclusion in the Chancellor's statement of some compensatory good news from the Ministry of Food. The planned saving of $14 million in imports of dollar sugar will involve, it is true, a reduction in the sugar ration from 10 oz. to 8 oz.; but the butter and bacon rations are both stepped up by 1 oz., and 3d. is added to the meat ration. These increases, of course, are possible only because—except for a small import of Canadian bacon—we do not depend on supplies of butter, meat and bacon from dollar sources. Indeed, by tapping new sources of supply in non-dollar areas, we have managed to lop $400 millions a year off the $900 millions which we were spending on dollar food in 1946-47. The danger is that the public may regard the welcome additions to the shopping basket as an indication that "things can't be quite so bad after all." The probability, however, is that less attention will be paid to the modest ration increases than to the Government's wise decision to reinstate sweet rationing. It had become indisputable that, at current prices, the supply of unrationed sweets was wholly inadequate to meet public demand, which the Minister of Food seriously underestimated. The result was a gross waste of time in queueing and a system of distribution utterly discrepant from the principle of "fair shares." The only alternative to reimposing rationing of sweets would have been to raise prices steeply; and that policy the Government rightly rejected.

A Pacific Pact ?

Chiang Kai-shek seems to believe that so long as he voices the slogans of anti-Communism, the Chinese counter-revolutionaries will provide him with a straggling army, and the Americans will pour dollars into his war-chest. No other explanation seems likely for his sudden visit to the Philippines. President Quirino has much in common with his Chinese ally; he, too, is fighting a rear-guard action against the Communists, and he, too, believes that there is no limit to dollar expenditure for the fight against Communism. The conference ended with the formation of a Chinese-Philippino Front against Communism, with which Siam, Indonesia, Korea, Australia and New Zealand have been asked to join in a Pacific Union. President Syngman-Rhee, the American-sponsored President of South Korea, already waging cold war against the Communists on his northern borders, has welcomed this invitation and suggested that the next meeting should be held in Seoul. Chiang Kai-shek has now returned to Canton. The Kuomintang is practically in liquidation, and he is now the Head of the Supreme Policy Council, formed to continue Nationalist resistance to the Communists. His face-saving activities are important mainly because they reflect the hope that America can be persuaded to use Asian reactionaries in the cold war. At the moment the State Department expresses only a "friendly interest." Secretary Acheson is still unfavourable to a Pacific Defence Treaty on the lines of the Atlantic Pact, and he has reaffirmed his support for Premier Nehru's belief, expressed on May 18, that such a plan would be premature. At the same time, it is unlikely that Chiang Kai-shek, Quirino and Syngman-Rhee, all of whom have been beneficiaries of America's anti-Communist policies, would make such a public declaration of their intentions unless they expected them to meet with some response in America.

Building Workers on Housing Policy

The Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers at its conference this week put forward a double demand for the nationalisation of the building industry and for the setting up of a separate Ministry of Housing. It is wrong, the delegates argued, for one Minister and one Department to have charge of two such vital matters as Health and Housing, each involving a large mass both of political controversy and of detailed administration. They seemed to think that housing was not getting enough attention, and in particular they urged the need to reduce building costs and to set up a Public Housing Corporation which could compete with the private builders pending full nationalisation, and could act as a mobile unit for the execution of important housing projects. The building industry, a number of speakers argued, is the easiest of all industries to bring under public ownership. This may be true in the case of the big contracting firms; but it hardly applies to the host of smaller building firms—least of all to the innumerable small jobbing builders who work mainly on repairs. The idea of a public Housing Corporation to work in direct competition with private enterprise has a great deal to recommend it; but is there any good reason to bring all building operations under a single monopoly, public or private? There is, however, a strong case for nationalising some of the main large-scale processes of manufacture of building materials, or at any rate for public competition in this field. As for the proposed Ministry of Housing, would it not be better to attach it to "Works" than to set up and entirely separate Department? Housing is not an industry: the claims for housing accommodation need to be weighed continually against those for other types of building. There should be one Department responsible for the building industry as a whole.

The Biter Bit

The orgy of self-congratulation with which the Press Lords greeted the Report of the Royal Commission has boomeranged unexpectedly. Exasperated by what he rightly regarded as gross misrepresentation of the Commission's findings, Sir George Waters, formerly editor of the *Scotsman*, and a sturdy Tory, violently attacked the treatment of the Report in the popular press; and went on to suggest at a meeting of the Institute of Journalists that, since a minority of the Commission had favoured a statutory body instead of the voluntary Press Council recommended in the Report, the Government might well take legislative action, with the support of the whole Commission, if the press did not behave itself better. His speech was illuminating for two reasons. In the first place, it partially confirmed the *Observer's* report on the Commission's activities which he and his colleagues had condemned as sheer misrepresentation. Secondly, it is interesting to notice that, so long as the Commission was coolly examining the misrepresentation to which the Government is daily subjected by certain newspapers, it remained a paragon of good-humoured British tolerance. Now that its own Report has been given a dose of misrepresentation, by no means above normal strength, Sir George becomes as abusive as Mr. Bevan. It is never too late to learn. But it is a pity that the Commission only began to understand the nature of press misrepresentation *after* it had published its findings.

PARLIAMENT: Dignity and Impudence

Wednesday

EXCEPT it be insomnia, nothing can compare in frustration with failure to "catch the Speaker's eye." For a few hours, Jones, an Honourable Member, sits patiently through the Front Bench speeches. He then rises hopefully in his place, only to find that eighteen others have risen, too. At about seven o'clock, with his tea, an undigested doughnut, sticking in his throat, he is still rising and falling, alternately anæsthetising himself during his colleagues' speeches, and, when his opponents are "up," mixing fresh poison for his opening reply. At half-past eight, his notes crumpled, his main theme already mauled by his predecessors, Jones sees the Speaker look his way. He braces himself; a bantering smile comes to his lips; he opens his mouth. "Mr. *Lee*," says the Speaker firmly, as he calls Jones' neighbour.

Ellis Smith, who had sat for two days without being called, felt obliged to demonstrate his protest. The acting Deputy-Speaker, Mr. Bowles, told him politely to sit down. Smith rose. Mr. Bowles again told him to sit down. Smith sat and rose again. (He'd got into the habit during the days of waiting.) In the embarrassing position that the authority of the Chair was being defied, Mr. Bowles sent for Mr. Speaker.

Members meanwhile were treating the matter with various expressions of interest. Some looked the other way as though it was ill-mannered to take notice. Others seemed to welcome the opportunity of a rest from speeches. A few tried to persuade Ellis Smith to withdraw. But he sat firm, arms folded, fingers lightly tapping. "Saam, Saam, pick oop tha moosket," said a ghostly voice. The Leader of the House cajoled him; the Chief Whip came and wheedled in vain. Everybody likes and esteems Ellis Smith, and the uncertainty as to what he intended was painful to his friends. If he had to be removed, nothing less than a palanquin would have been suitable for his dignified obduracy.

Luckily, Mr. Speaker dealt rapidly and good-humouredly with his suspension. Honour was completely satisfied, and Ellis Smith, having made such a memorable intervention in the Economic Debate, withdrew to the general relief, trailing his musket. "Mr. Butler!" said Mr. Speaker; or in paraphrase, "Let battle commence!"

The winding-up speeches of Butler and the Foreign Secretary had to be cut short because of the Ellis Smith wrangle. But, within a few minutes, the Foreign Secretary made the important point, listened to with serious attention by the whole House, that it is better for Britain to conform with the dollar trade-system than to try to associate herself in some "third" economic and financial grouping. He brought the House back to the gravity of the crisis which earlier Tory speakers like Thorneycroft, suavely ranting, had veiled in party politics, even as they denied doing so. When Silverman interrupted, Winterton, who apparently thought the debate dealt with holidays and travel, told him to go to Tel-Aviv. Silverman, who knew what the debate was about, and anyhow had already been to Tel-Aviv, turned Winterton an indifferent cheek.

The early part of the debate began in gloom. Everybody was sorry to hear of the Chancellor's ill-health, and his presence in the Chamber the day before leaving for Switzerland enhanced the general sympathy. But after Eden's restrained speech, Donald Bruce, in the roustabout style of the Minister of Health (whose P.P.S. he is) brightened the Labour benches and infuriated the Tories. Bruce is now widely recommended as the Man-Most-Likely-to-Annoy-the-Opposition-Next-Year.

What emerged most clearly from the Economic Debate—and George Wigg drew attention to it in an impressive speech—was the double-talk of the Tory Party. In the Chamber and in their week-end speeches, the Tories say "No cuts in the welfare services!" Butler, the idealogist, and Houghton, the business-man, were agreed on that. But when the Tory economists and industrialists state their thought in the financial press and in trade-association memoranda, they leave no doubt that deflation, cuts and controlled unemployment is their macabre and familiar solution for the nation's economic difficulties.

MAURICE EDELMAN.

THE TORY INTELLECTUALS

THE dollar crisis has had one important by-product. It has revealed the readiness of the Opposition to exploit an international crisis for purely domestic ends. In the course of the Commons debate last Thursday, for instance, Mr. David Eccles, the acknowledged spokesman of the Tory intellectuals, advocated the end of any effort to control wages, profits and personal incomes; and argued that the Dominions could scarcely be blamed if, with Socialists in charge in London, they broke away and made their separate deals with the United States. His economic anarchism was matched by that of Mr. Lyttelton, who denounced bilateral pacts in general and trade with Russia in particular, and seemed seriously to believe that the sole impediment to the restoration of world free trade was the rigidity of our controlled economy and the costs of our social services; once these Socialist obstacles to recovery were removed, the world could "return to normalcy." The same argument has been developed in recent weeks by the *Economist*. Anyone who suggests that this is primarily a dollar crisis is now accused of spreading "poisonous gas." The responsibility must be laid exclusively on the shoulders of the Labour Government and of those Socialist intellectuals who display "a deep distrust of the price mechanism and a refusal to accept as final the verdict of an open market."

To this storm of partisan polemics, Mr. Ernest Bevin, whom the *Economist* does not accuse of being a Socialist intellectual, replied last Monday. He reminded the Government's critics that their deflationary policy between 1922 and 1938 cost the country in strikes and lock-outs 250,000,000 workdays and £1,290,000,000 in unemployment relief. He might have added that it did not even achieve the result of destroying the rigidity of our economic system. British capitalism responded to deflation with an intensification of restrictionism through trade associations, price rings and cartels. Indeed, this pre-war restrictionism is the main cause of our high costs and obsolescent plants to-day. Why should any sane person believe that another May Committee and another National Government, pledged to deflation, would produce a different result?

This does not mean that we deny the need either to reduce the costs of production or to limit Government expenditure. But in talking of costs it is as well to keep a sense of proportion. There is no evidence that exports produced under British Socialism are failing to compete against those of other free economies such as France or Italy, or indeed that British efficiency is lower than efficiency anywhere outside the U.S.A. Indeed, our "rigid," "over-planned," "over-controlled" economy has made a more remarkable post-war recovery than any other in the world.

Certainly, in the face of the American recession, our efficiency must be increased still further. This cannot be done, however, by deflation. What the Government must do is to use raw material allocations and price controls as an inducement to the efficient and as a sanction against the inefficient producer. The *Economist* is right that it is useless merely to appeal either to employers or employees. What is needed is a planned economy which helps those who help themselves and permits the less efficient to fall unassisted by the way. In fact, we must adapt the methods already employed in sections of the heavy and light engineering trades to all our export industries.

In the second place, it is true that Government expenditure is running at a dangerously high level and that commitments already undertaken will cause further increases unless action is taken at once. The Government should review in particular the proposed outlay on such marginal or at least immediately unproductive, items of capital expenditure as the reconstruction of the transport system, as well as the formidable sums allocated to Defence. The rising costs of local government should be probed as well as those of Whitehall. Large economies can be made, but it is pure irresponsibility to suggest that British goods can be made competitive in the dollar area simply by cutting Government expenditure.

It is indeed essential to distinguish the internal and external problems which face the Government. They are closely related, but they are not identical, as Opposition spokesmen so often imply. If Mr. Churchill were returned to power and selected the editor of the *Economist* as his Chancellor of the Exchequer, they would be faced with all the problems with which Sir Stafford and Mr. Bevin are going to grapple in Washington as well as a first-rate industrial crisis at home. The difference would be that, whereas the Labour Ministers are determined not to sacrifice Full Employment for the sake of an agreement with the Americans, Mr. Churchill would have thrown it overboard before his negotiators set sail across the Atlantic; and would have to accept without a struggle the status for the Commonwealth of a second Dixieland.

In winding up the debate last Monday, Mr. Bevin stated that the issue was whether the world should be divided into a rouble bloc and a sterling-dollar bloc or into three separate blocs. No sane Englishman can have an unconditional preference for the second alternative. There is no intrinsic virtue in bilateralism under which, indeed, we may have to pay higher prices for food and raw materials than we could obtain in the dollar area. But it is equally true that we cannot accept the fusion of the sterling with the dollar area unconditionally; and the only chance of a tolerable compromise in Washington is to make it perfectly clear that, unless the Americans fulfil certain conditions, we shall be compelled to go our own way, even though this would involve drastic cuts in the standard of living.

It is here, of course, that the external and the domestic problems overlap. For the main condition that Sir Stafford Cripps will make in Washington is the survival of our Socialist planned economy. If part of the price, for instance, which the Americans demand for a single sterling-dollar area is that American investment, either here or in the Colonies, should be freed from the obligations of the Welfare State, Sir Stafford will be uncompromising, whereas a Conservative negotiator might be compliant. And this will not be because a Socialist does not welcome American investment overseas, but because he believes that such investment can only be fruitful, politically as well as economically, if it raises the standard of living in the country in which it is made. Sir Stafford would welcome the extension of Marshall Aid to India, Pakistan and the Southern Pacific—such an extension would relieve us of one of the most grievous drains on our dollar reserves. But he must ensure that this aid really aids the recipient as well as the donor. Mere dollars, as the Americans have discovered in China and Greece, are no bulwark against Communism.

In propounding this condition of sterling-dollar co-operation, and imposing the immediate cuts in dollar imports, which prove that they are in earnest, the Government will not be displaying the doctrinaire anti-Americanism attributed to them by their critics. America does not consist simply of Wall Street and the reactionary Dixiecrat-Republican alliance in Congress, President Truman's Administration is pledged to the Fair Deal, and this includes not only the revolutionary Brannan Plan for American agriculture but the construction of the Welfare State and a planned economy. In this programme he has widespread popular support and, sooner or later, we may hope that it will become the American way of life. Until it does, the British Welfare State and the sterling area are bound to live dangerously. Indeed it is unlikely that more will be achieved in Washington next September than a patched-up compromise which satisfies no one and compels the Commonwealth to reduce still further its dollar imports. But one thing is certain. To scrap the Welfare State for the sake of an extension of Marshall Aid or the speedy achievement of multilateralism would help no one except the Communist Party; and the ultimate result of the surrender would be the absorption of the whole world into the rouble bloc.

POOR RELATIONS

THERE were two very peculiar things about the annual meeting of the French Socialist Congress at the Mutualité in Paris, last week-end. The public galleries of the hall were almost completely empty; and, on the large bookstall in the lobby, there was a large display of the writings of Kravchenko, General Anders, William Bullitt, Mikolajczyk, and other books describing the horrors of Communist Russia. These were flanked by little else than a few dusty second-hand copies of Guesde and Jaurès, besides a short booklet containing the wartime reminiscences of Léon Blum. The platform was decorated with morose-looking pictures of Marx, Guesde and Jaurès. What Marx had to do with it all was hard to say; as for Guesde and Jaurès, the present secretary-general of the French Socialist Party, M. Guy Mollet, frankly explained in a recent speech that, while the French Socialist Party loved and honoured their prophets, conditions had changed since their day.

There were no slogans strung across the platform, but dozens of little flags had been pasted on a strip of red calico running round the deserted balcony—flags of all the Socialist parties of the world. There was also a board displaying some more little flags which were those of the member States of Comisco. Another bill-board, also decorated with flags, indicated who all the foreign delegates to the Congress were. Many of these guests were refugees, from Poland, Rumania, and Czechoslovakia. Across the Rue St. Victor, the terrace of the *Rotonde de la Mutualité* was crowded with lively, beer-drinking, back-slapping delegates, many of whom were roaring with laughter at the story of how, that morning, while a Japanese delegate made a long speech in Japanese which nobody could either understand or translate, old Salomon Grumbach kept nodding and smiling with approval and uttering *très bien, très bien* at the end of each peroration.

I mention these trivialities because each one is significant in its own way. The galleries were not crowded, because, as distinct from the Communists in France, the Socialists do not—least of all in Paris—draw a crowd, and do not stir anybody's imagination. "Nature has been kind to the Communists," one delegate was heard remarking on the terrace of the *Rotonde*, "they've got their Thorez—what a physique and what a speaker!" The Socialist leaders are aware of it; but Guy Mollet, in a recent speech, said it was unhealthy when working-class women brought their babies to be kissed by *notre Maurice*. No hero-worship among the French Socialists; and indeed, no heroes. Except—except perhaps old Léon Blum. But he, too, makes a singular and, at times, incongruous impression. Old and sick, he now speaks like an ancient prophet, like somebody at a revivalist meeting: "You must have faith, faith, and still more faith. Slowly, but stubbornly, we must reconquer the French working class. Have faith in Socialism, for Socialism will save France, Europe, and the world."

And then—that bookstall. Communism is the enemy: Communism is the competitor: the Communists are the rogues who stole away the heart of the French working class. This frantic anti-Communism runs right through the whole of the Socialist Party, from the most reformist of the Ministers (Moch, Mayer, or Ramadier) to the extreme Left wing, represented by that snappy little man, Marceau Pivert.

Nothing in the world is easier than to be funny about the French Socialists. Their resistance record was not outstanding; they are now members of a bourgeois coalition—quite helpless, some of their critics at the Congress were saying. Yet are they, as the Americans would say, dead from the neck up? That was not the impression one received after sitting through three days of their discussions. Many of them have been doing some hard thinking. Why are they in the present Government? The official answer is that, since 1947, they had no other choice. With the formation of the Cominform and the birth of de Gaulle's R.P.F., it became the sacred duty of the Socialists to save what could be saved in the first place—the democratic institutions and the freedoms of France. And this they did, they now proudly declare. "We had to fight on three fronts," they now say, "against the Stalinites, against the Gaullists and—against poverty." The first two battles they claim to have won; the third one still remains to be won; and in this battle they are, admittedly, hampered by their coalition colleagues of the Right.

Guy Mollet kept on declaring that the Party was dissatisfied with the Government's record in economic matters: mal-distribution of wealth in France was as great, if not greater, than before the war, and was much more unfair. Others harped on the shortage of State schools, as a result of which a million children would, in a year or two, have no choice but to be sent to religious schools. (This the M.R.P. Ministers knew, and would do their best to sabotage the school-building programme.) Then there were Vietnam and Madagascar: the Socialist Party heartily disapproved of the Government's policy in both matters; the trial, ending in the death sentence (since commuted) on two Madagascar deputies charged with instigating the rebellion of 1947, had been a miscarriage of justice, and most of the Socialists seemed to agree with M. André Philip that a new trial was essential. As for Vietnam, it was obviously one of the issues on which the Socialist Congress felt most deeply. A resolution was passed demanding that peace talks with "all the parties concerned, without exception" be started, and that help should be sought from Uno; the desire of the majority that the Socialist Ministers stay in the Government was, however, strong enough to defeat the amendment of the excitable M. Marceau Pivert, who demanded that an ultimatum be presented to the Government that it start peace talks at Vietnam at once, failing which the Socialist Ministers would leave the Government. The Congress would not go that far; even so, the reports that 250,000 Vietnamese have been massacred, just as 95,000 natives of Madagascar were massacred in 1947, is something profoundly shocking to the French Socialist conscience. For the French Socialists are civilised, peaceful, gentle people.

The odd thing, of course, is that the Communists are making as much noise as the Socialists about the horrors of Madagascar and Vietnam, but, throughout the three days of the Socialist Congress, not one mention was made of Socialists and Communists seeing eye-to-eye on anything. In French Socialist eyes, an alliance with the Communists has become "unnatural." This was perhaps best explained by Emmanuel Mounier of the Catholic *Esprit*, who, in reply to Maurice Thorez's overtures, at the recent Montreuil congress of the C.P., to himself and Claude Bourdet of *Combat*, said that past experience in Poland, Czechoslovakia and elsewhere had shown only too clearly that the Communists had the unfortunate habit of swallowing their loyal allies as soon as they needed them no longer. Events in Prague, Warsaw and Budapest are having serious repercussions here. Yet the Socialist are rather afraid of being swallowed up by their present bourgeois partners. The membership of the Socialist Party has been declining catastrophically in the last three years, and is now down to 140,000 and, except in the Nord, it is now predominantly *petit bourgeois*. In some of the smaller Federations the active membership has dwindled to nothing; the Party has, as many speakers pointed out, no slogans, no propaganda machine of any consequence; and the *Populaire*, the wretched two-page party organ, is the most decrepit of all the French newspapers, with only 6,000 readers in the whole of Paris, and less than 40,000 in the whole of France. In elections they do reasonably well—with the help of the middle-class parties. But the thought that they are not really a working-class party has become a painful obsession.

One or two things have, however, clearly emerged from this Congress. One of them is that the Socialists are beginning to wonder—despite their present "inferiority complex" (to which many references were made)—whether they may not, after all, profit in time from the "Stalinites' unpopularity"—an unpopularity which, they think, is bound to grow. But, as Marceau Pivert pointed out, they can scarcely profit from it, so long as they remain tied to the apron strings of the bourgeois Coalition. Another obvious remark, made by one speaker, was that it was all very well telling the working class of France to "distrust the Communists"—for the reply the French worker gives is: "After all, the Communists are the only people who still kick up a fuss about my earning 12,000 or 15,000 francs a month."

Another point, on which there was a great deal of talk, was the internationalism of the French Socialists. There were all those dozens of flags in the hall, and the Comisco display, and a lot was said about the need to revive the Socialist International. All speakers on this subject threw hopeful glances at England—at "our wonderful and admirable sister, the British Labour Party." "If only we, in France, were as powerful as the Labour Party is in England, what a wonderful country we could make of it," and so on. For all that, the French Socialists are not at all satisfied with either the foreign record or the "international Socialist" record of the Labour Party. Was it necessary for the British Labour Party to take so feeble a line over Franco Spain? Why did it not support France over the Ruhr? Finally, what sort of internationalists are these that insist on having what is, in effect, the equivalent of the

veto in the Council of Europe—an organisation which, owing to the grudging attitude taken by the Labour Party, is not at all what French Socialists—with great Jaurès-Briand traditions—had hoped for? "In a Third Force Europe we *must* have some limitation of sovereignty!" For the French Socialists are still full of the sweetest Briand verbiage—the Mollet Report positively drips with it. Altogether, the French Socialists' attitude to the Labour Party is sometimes amusing to watch; the Labour Party is the rich and successful cousin, who is apt to be awfully condescending to the poor Socialist relations in Europe.

ALEXANDER WERTH

AN IRISH DIARY

WHY we talk about a "busman's holiday" I can never make out. I've never seen a London driver careering off with his bus on August Bank Holiday or a conductor punching his family's tickets on the way to Margate for a week by the sea. The phrase should obviously be a "journalist's holiday," for he, poor fellow, is never off duty. True, he has unrivalled chances of globe-trotting and globe-hopping, but everywhere he carries with him his notebook, the knowledge that a telegraph office is in reach, and the incurable habit of writing mentally to a specified length so that there's a short-story in the sight of a boy and girl on the sea-shore, a paragraph in the badness or excellence of his lunch, and a leading article in the prices of goods in the shop-windows. There is, it is true, a hoary legend in the office of the *Manchester Guardian* about a member of the staff who, taking his holiday in the West Indies, arrived in time for a monster earthquake and immediately despatched a laconic cable to the editor announcing that he was safe. I have always admired the hero of this incredible story; after all he was on holiday and justified in not cabling a historic eye-witness account. But few of us are made of such stern stuff. We can no more resist scribbling on our holidays than Lord Peter Wimsey could refuse to do a spot of detection when he stumbled on a corpse during his honeymoon.

* * *

This journalistic habit has another danger—the tendency to discover what the reader will expect. To avoid it I begin by asserting that though I have spent some days in the country of Lady Gregory and Synge, I have not recorded any scraps of poetry falling naturally from the mouths of unspoilt Irish colleens. Neither do I intend to describe the loveliness of Connemara, which, like the west coast of Scotland, is usually shrouded in mist, becoming, when bathed in sunshine, only comparable with parts of Greece. Cromwell, I presume, had not seen a sunset in Connemara when he declared that he would drive the people of the North "to hell or Connacht." Perhaps he knew of it only as a desert of peat bog. Only by centuries of continuous toil has the Irish peasant piled enough stones on to walls to make room to grow a few potatoes or a tiny patch of weedy barley. If hell is a place which people would leave if they could, it must be admitted that Connemara, which to the visitor is heaven, statistically qualifies for the other place. In every home you enter the story is the same; out of a large family one child remains at home while the rest have gone to seek their fortunes, sometimes in Dublin, but usually in England or America. "Strange!" said an Irish friend, "we drive the hardest bargain when we sell our cattle to England, but we spend about £1,500 a head on rearing and educating and training our children and then send them off *gratis* as doctors or lawyers or labourers to work in England."

Some money, of course, goes back. The Irish in America have been remitting dollars to their homes for a century and more. But it is an unsatisfactory form of economy. Nor does tourist traffic really solve the problem for the Irish any more than for the Scottish crofters. There is no economic salvation in a job which grossly overworks people for three months in the year and leaves them idle for the rest. Paternal Governments have tried to relieve poverty and to check the steady decline in the population by here and there re-building a few of the ever-increasing number of abandoned houses and starting small hand-machine factories where girls can make a few pounds a week knitting jumpers or the like. It is better than nothing; one of these rural industries I visited was a cheerful and healthy place. But no problem is solved. If the young men emigrate, then the girls won't stay at home. They want homes of their own, not "juvenile employment." I was told by one who has had a long study of the subject that the remedy for Connemara is big-scale afforestation, which would really create a permanently profitable and useful industry, employing the men in their own country. I asked whether trees were not hard to grow in this windswept land? The authoritative answer was that timber grows as well and is more quickly ready for cutting in Connemara than in Sweden or Finland. By way of proof I was shown large estates, magnificently timbered, where landlords and their agents had lived. "I don't believe," said my friend, "that God has so arranged things that trees only grow for Protestants."

* * *

The present Government is a coalition of the Left and the Right, united only by a common determination to keep de Valera out of office. It holds its own in the Dail by a precarious majority; its justication is that it is unusually honest and is said to have cleared up the petty corruption that had penetrated deep into de Valera's party machine during sixteen years of uninterrupted power. The outstanding member of the Government is, of course, Sean MacBride, who has a firm grasp of economic reality and who might do a lot for Ireland if he were Minister of Reconstruction with a majority behind him. As it is, he is building up a remarkable reputation as a member of O.E.E.C. Mr. MacBride has now persuaded the Dail to pay for a new Irish News Service, the main object of which, as I understand it, is to explain to the world how wicked the British are in maintaining partition. This aroused cynical comments amongst many Irishmen. It was American pressure which induced Britain to make the settlement of 1922, but America will not now bring pressure to bear on Britain to drive Ulster out of the British Commonwealth. Historically, geographically and economically, the Six Counties ought to be part of a United Ireland, but because of the religious cleavage they have, in fact, a majority as determined to remain within the British Commonwealth as any member of the I.R.A. can be to be free of it. I did meet one woman in Ireland who thought that the British could unite Ireland by "a stroke of the pen," but I met many more who were well aware that the disastrous set-back to all our hopes of a united Ireland were due to the repeal of the External Relations Act and not to Mr. Attlee. In giving Sir Basil Brooke the guarantee he asked for, the Prime Minister was, after all, only formally stating the obvious fact that to-day, unhappily, Northern Ireland is now simply a county of England. Given time and patience and a lot of Catholic babies, this situation can be ended. Given inflammatory speeches and funds from the South to support Catholic voters in the North, and Sir Basil Brooke and his friends will sleep very comfortably at nights.

* * *

Douglas Hyde, first President of Eire, was a dignified scholar whom I remember once meeting at Trinity. When his campaign began the project of reviving Gaelic seemed merely fanciful. It was largely Hyde's enthusiasm that gave the language and literature of Ireland its rebirth. During the first world war he retired from the Gaelic League, which he had done so much to create, because it had taken on a political aspect. Douglas Hyde was a Conservative scholar, not a rebel with a taste for prison. I have tried to find out in Ireland whether any good purpose has been served by reviving Gaelic. Farmers have told me that the effort to teach all children a second language not seriously in use means that they leave school knowing no language properly. To those I talked to the whole idea of compulsory Gaelic in the schools seemed a waste of time, a survival from the British that should have died by now. Indeed, talking to ordinary people in Ireland, one finds a remarkable readiness to write off Britain's past treatment of Ireland as a past unhappy story that may now well be forgotten. Irish people, of course, know the story, while British people do not. We have a genius for forgiving people whom we have wronged. English people forget that we periodically and wantonly ravaged Ireland with fire and slaughter from the days of Queen Elizabeth onwards. We are justified to-day in telling Irish politicians when we think that their actions unnecessarily perpetuate an evil heritage, but we are never right, and in view of the past, could never be right, in adopting an attitude of moral superiority.

* * *

I was grieved, on my return, to read of the death of Eva Hubback. She was a woman of much character and capacity, a stalwart who worked with Eleanor Rathbone for family endowment and who gave practical and useful substance to the Suffrage Movement, which too often seemed to assume that once women had the vote there was nothing more to worry about. During recent years Mrs. Hubback had done a fine piece of work at Morley College and had worked successfully with Lord Simon of Wythenshawe in education for citizenship. One of their joint activities was the creation of the *Universities Quarterly*.

* * *

Two things struck me about the Haigh trial. We all enjoy reading this type of disgusting material—which is what makes "disgusting" one of the most psychologically interesting words in the language. Since we have a taste for the disgusting, we cannot blame commercial press proprietors for excluding so much more important and wholesome matter to make room for it. But if details of murder cases were banned, we should soon be as reconciled to the loss as we are in the case of divorce. My second comment is that in the case of a murderer who claimed to have killed nine persons no one much worries whether he is regarded as incurably insane and sent to Broadmoor or judged sane and sent to the gallows. The important thing is that he must not be left at large. The law, of course, is quite absurd—the MacNaghton Rule, making the test whether the criminal knew what he was doing and knew that he was doing wrong when he did it, is, from the point of view of medical science, absurd. Unhappily, in the Haigh case the psychiatrist who gave the only evidence on behalf of the accused had no idea of presenting it in a way that could, conceivably, affect the minds of judge or jury.

CRITIC

THE GOLDEN SKYWAY

(After James Elroy Flecker)

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE:
Attend, O Merchants at the Board of Trade!
The State-owned, airborne caravan awaits!
Behold what new incentives are displayed
Along the Golden Skyway to the States!

To all purveyors of our merchandise
We offer loans at favourable rates,
New vistas gleam for private enterprise
Beyond the Golden Highway to the States!

THE PRINCIPAL POTTER:
My warehouse bursts with vases veined with gold,
With decorated saucers, cups and plates,
But still an equal number stay unsold
Beyond the Golden Skyway to the States.

THE CHIEF DRAPER:
I have rich carpets in colossal bales,
Curtains and counterpanes in countless crates,
But export rejects still exceed my sales
Beyond the Golden Skyway to the States.

THE PRINCIPAL GROCER:
My dainty biscuits moulder on the shelves,
My cocoa on the quay accumulates.

THE PRINCIPAL CUTLER:
Americans make knives and forks themselves,
Beyond the Golden Skyway to the States.

THE CHIEF SUNDRIESMAN:
My natural rubber fights a substitute,
The dollar market for my tin abates,
Strong sales-resistance meets my wool and jute
Beyond the Golden Skyway to the States.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE:
Merchant Adventurers, be not dismayed!
What though the buyer's market fluctuates?
Behold concessions from the Board of Trade
And take the Golden Highway to the States!

At home the profit motive is suppressed,
For export traders it discriminates—
Keep you the motive, and we take the rest,
So blaze the Golden Skyway to the States.

THE MERCHANTS:
With profits and expenses guaranteed,
We will adventure with our sample freights;
To sell the Yankees what they do not need,
We take the Golden Skyway to the States.

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

Prizes are awarded of £1 for the first entry and 5/- for each of the others printed. Paste entries on a POSTCARD.

Mr. Commissioner Bush James, in the Divorce Court to-day, remarked, "For a husband to permit his wife to go on committing adultery and then to go into the next room and himself commit adultery with his hostess seems to me an extraordinary piece of bad behaviour."—*Evening Argus.* (W. G. Armstrong.)

Regarding the second accusation . . . that schoolchildren were used in order to pump Conservative propaganda into the parents, this charge is without foundation as we staged the beauty competition and ankle competition for that purpose and, judging by the large crowd present, this method of serving up Conservative propaganda is greatly appreciated. —Letter in *Bexleyheath Observer.* (C. V. Jiggens.)

"Just the thing for the Mess," declared Capt. R. Parsons, adjutant of 513 L.A.A. Regt., R.A., Sheffield, when he bought a stuffed alligator for 65s.—*South Yorkshire Times.* (D. Higgins.)

A lead from the Corporation, a few pounds spent on gondolas, tables outside the waterside pubs, plenty of coloured lights—and Wigan, like Venice, could be raking in dollars from tourists.—*Daily Mirror.* (P. J. Price.)

SOLDIERS AND POLITICS

LORD MONTGOMERY was one of the outstanding soldiers of the second World War; and nothing in the criticisms his methods evoked among some of his American colleagues and their angry journalistic supporters has, as far as our knowledge goes, been able seriously to affect the immense reputation he acquired from the moment that he assumed command of the Eighth Army. In the light of his achievements it was perfectly natural that he should be appointed C.I.G.S. in succession to Lord Alanbrooke; and it was equally intelligible that, once the decision had been taken to unify the defence of the Atlantic Powers against the danger of possible aggression, he should have been appointed chief of the Combined Planning Staff of the partners in the new alliance.

But Lord Montgomery was appointed to his high posts on the strength of his professional competence, not on the ground of his political opinions. Already, before he went to Fountainebleau, there was a certain regret at his insistent habit of speech-making. When he was at the War Office he seemed to miss no opportunity of explaining his views on some of the most complex issues of civilisation, from the relation of the citizen to the State to the metaphysical foundations of ethics. Now, he has chosen the occasion of his inspection of the Dutch Army to make a new and incisive pronouncement of the type which, if it had been made by a civil servant of comparable eminence in this country, would have led to his instant dismissal from his post. Lord Montgomery not only informs us about his private religious faith—a matter which, in the West, at least, is regarded as a matter of wholly personal concern. He tells us that "as a Christian soldier," he "declares himself at war with Communism, and all that it stands for." He proclaims that the "nations of the West" are to-day at war with Communism. He warns us that the present "cold war" is "nevertheless war," and that this "struggle between Communism and democracy" may "eventually lead us into a 'hot or shooting war.'" Realising that this would be "disastrous for the whole world," he is insistent that it must be prevented. To prevent it, he calls for strength; "in the hands of strength," says Lord Montgomery, "lie the keys of peace and war." He feels confident that the West can defeat any challenge. He explains that "the armed forces of Britain, already deployed on the mainland of Europe," will, together with the Field-Marshal himself while he is still active, defend the "Netherlands from aggression."

"Lord Montgomery," said *The Times*, in commenting on this speech, "has the gift . . . of cutting through the conventional . . . undergrowth of accepted phrases, and laying bare the root of the matter." What, on this occasion, was the root of the matter to the Field-Marshal? He regards the "cold war" as does General Franco, as a war between Communism and Christianity. He insists that the "cold war" is an actual war which may become a "hot or shooting war" at any moment. To prevent this, he favours complete unity of the West for defence purposes, and, by inference at least, a great increase in armaments and, no doubt, man-power. He assures the Dutch that our armed forces "already deployed on the mainland of Europe," will be used at once against aggression; and he promises, in effect, American aid if the "East" should "again" attempt to invade Western Europe.

I hope, with all my heart, that this is not the way that Mr. Attlee and his colleagues regard the present difficult international situation. I do not know what Lord Montgomery means by "Christianity"; whether it is to him a number of churches, or a body of religious doctrine, or a system of ethical precepts. If it is the first or the second, he would do well to remember that most European Socialists are anti-clerical, as are many in Great Britain, and that, though they are strongly opposed to Communist methods, they would resist any attempt at their imposition on Western Europe with no atom of desire for a victory on behalf of any church or its theology. If Lord Montgomery means by "Christianity" a system of ethical precepts, those, for example, embodied in the Sermon on the Mount, I am bound to point out, first, that they are not specifically Christian at all, and, second, that if they were applied, they would revolutionise the world as Lord Montgomery knows it, and replace it by institutions and ideas he would probably dislike as passionately as the Roman Catholic Church disliked the followers of Peter Waldo or the spiritual Francisans. Before committing himself too far, Lord Montgomery would do well to remember that recent Popes have had no difficulty in coming to terms with practically every Fascist movement in Europe, and that some of the Cardinals were warm supporters of Hitler.

If the "cold war" is, as he says, really a war for which we must mobilise all our strength, Lord Montgomery ought to tell us how much more expenditure he believes defence requires, and how far he believes that further withdrawal of man-power from the civilian effort will make economic recovery impossible. When he points to British troops on the mainland of Europe as, so to say, the vanguard of our contribution against the onset of armies of aggression, does he really believe that, either in number or equipment, they could hold up those armies for a sufficient time to permit the arrival of full-scale aid, especially from America? And how can he be certain, further, that this American aid will come? The North Atlantic Security Pact is having, anyway, a difficult time in the Senate; and Senator Taft, not the least important of its members, leads a powerful opposition to its ratification, being particularly opposed to the expenditure of American funds on the rearmament of its European signatories. What, further, does Lord Montgomery mean by his phrase about an Eastern aggressor "again" attempting to invade Western Europe? Soviet Russia did not attempt to invade Western Europe in the war of 1914-18, or in the war of 1939-45; in the second war, it stopped at lines agreed upon at conferences with the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Great Britain. Does "again" refer to the Napoleonic wars? Or to Attila and his Huns? Or, when he spoke, was Lord Montgomery in a Kiplingesque frame of mind, and thinking of Greece and Turkey, perhaps of Iran and the Middle East also, as conceptually a part of Western Europe? Or was there really nothing precise in his mind except a warning to Russia against aggression? Perhaps this is what *The Times* meant when it praised his "gift" of "laying bare the root of the matter."

As a strategist, and as a leader of troops in the field, Lord Montgomery commands high and deserved respect. But he really ought to remember that the wise soldier does not, for the reasons General Eisenhower gave in his famous letter refusing the Presidential nomination in 1948, concern himself with political problems he has not been trained to understand. Marshals Pétain and Weygand and General de Gaulle in France, Hindenburg and Ludendorff in Germany, Lord Roberts and Sir Henry Wilson in Great Britain, Pilsudski and the "régime of the Colonels" in Poland, General Metaxas in Greece, are merely illustrations of the possibility that an eminent soldier risks his reputation when he seeks to define ends, and not restrict himself, given

those ends by responsible statesmen, to developing the means to assure the authorities he serves that those ends are likely to be attained. Not least, since Lord Montgomery believes that a Third War would be a disaster, he might well, instead of making speeches as provocative as they are untimely, remind himself that as good a way as any of promoting peace is to look at the mote in one's own eye as well as to draw attention to the beam in the other side's. For, quite frankly, Lord Montgomery's speech to the Royal Netherlands Society does not suggest that skill in ideological analysis is among the special gifts with which he has been endowed.

HAROLD J. LASKI

THE MIND OF GERMANY

SIGNS of late disaster, moral and material, thrust themselves before the visiting eye until they seem to fill the whole frame of social life in these battered Western Zones. And yet these signs are curiously misleading, for it is the context alone, and not the content, that has changed. The content, on closer inspection, appears to be much the same as it was before. Not in the sense of there being an organised German ideology, genuflections to the reigning God Democracy apart; but the notion of having paid because they were badly led, because through no particular fault of their own they happened to lose the war; the conviction that their fatal mistakes were those of calculation rather than of principle; the belief that "the Parties" are no better than they ever were—this is the same mood, surely, as the mood of pre-war Germany.

No doubt it was bound to be so in some degree. Only a revolution can change the content as well as the context; and revolutions, as we know, are bad form nowadays. That there should have been political confusion, anarchy, and even idiocy in the period immediately after the war seemed natural enough at the time. An electoral poster that I saw in Düsseldorf two years ago, appealing for support for the "Party of the Party-less," since "The Parties Have All Betrayed You," seemed neither surprising nor unduly depressing. Such mouldering stuff was laid bare in those days, one felt, by the same destructive process as had bared the dank foundations of factories built when Father Krupp was yet a stripling. But it is another story to find the same sort of thing in 1949, the year when the Germans in the West—if we are to believe the half of what we hear—put on the garments of democracy and brandish above their heads the torch of social justice.

"The Eastern Refugees in the Western Zones," declared lately Guenter Goetzendorf, their main spokesman in Bavaria, "are filled with profound mistrust of the existing Parties." The chairman of the refugees' organisation in Württemberg-Baden, Herr Minister Mattes, similarly announced the other day that "we have lost all confidence in the existing Parties," adding that the only thing left to do was to form a political organisation of their own.

Propaganda for return of "the Eastern Territories," that were taken by Poland (usually called "the Eastern Zone" nowadays, leaving the Russians in occupation of "the Middle Zone") is as common in Western Germany as propaganda against dismantling—which means that it is all-pervasive outside the ranks of the Communists, who steadily refuse, for their part, to make it an issue. Songs are coming on the market of which the following verse is a fair sample both in style and flavour:

No matter that they drove us out,
Drove us from our Homeland dear,
Still our hearts are there and beating,
Eastward still our eyes we strain:
Never will we now abandon
Native Eastland ours, but sue
Freedom for it soon again now,
Watchwords thrilling: Far yet True!

The Military Governors have frowned on such organisations for the time being. After the general elections this August, however, when the Bonn "constitution" comes into force for the Western Zones, the Germans will be allowed to form whatever Parties they like; and it will be then, no doubt, that the fun will really begin. Even so, it would be wrong to think that the phenomena of extremist nationalism are likely to repeat themselves in easily recognisable forms: the mental condition of Germany is more complex than that. There does appear to be a genuine revulsion against the past even among those many Germans who remain untouched by, or contemptuous of, the "democratic Parties." The unresolved problem—which the Western Allies, for all their democratic language, have left more or less where they found it—is to know how to prevent this disillusioned resentment against "Hitler and all that" (including, of course, the Weimar Republic) from denying this great mass of people all normal access to political thought and political activity.

The opinions of the younger generation, as far as one can see, have still to be formed. Such opinions as they do have belong mostly to that warm and sentimental wilderness of myth and legend where so many of the young of the last German generation wandered in the 'twenties. It is important to remember that the very atmosphere of "democracy" in Western Germany—where the word is officially interpreted as meaning a multitude of conflicting opinions whose cacophony and contradiction are essential guarantees against "doctrinaire dictatorship"—adds luxuriance to this wilderness. Where no one need be in the wrong, there is precious little to show why anyone should be in the right.

Ex-Corporal Sauer, for instance, who drives a Control Commission taxi in Frankfort, was probably giving a fair picture of the views of the *Frontsoldaten*—an important social category in Germany today—when he said that he could see no possible chance of his ever joining any of the established Parties. He holds that they are neither honest nor democratic; he thinks the Bonn "constitution" a piece of nonsense. But he is certainly not a Nazi; his main feelings about the war are that he fought it decently and asked for no favours, and that, in some obscure but quite definite way, this ought to be recognised and held in his favour. In some respects, he is a good deal ahead of the common opinion.

"All the same, it was better that you lost the war?" This is the key question.

He thinks it was—not because the army didn't deserve to win on the balance of military proficiency but because "there's some Germans who aren't fit to win a war," and because "otherwise we'd be soldiers still, there'd be no end to it."

Another of the same kind, an ex-sergeant of armoured cars, couldn't bring himself to admit that it was better to have lost the war.

"But if you hadn't? Just think—"

"Yes, I know," he said, "but don't imagine we *Frontsoldaten* would have let that mess go on. We'd have come home and put the S.S. against the wall."

From this wilderness of illusion and disillusion the landmarks and loyalties that will govern the Germany of tomorrow have still to emerge. There is still a chance for genuine self-education, even a good chance, about the facts of the last few years. These men are willing to be talked to, are eager to listen; what they need, above all, is information. The Flicks and Thyssens may still control the Ruhr; the old bureaucracy may find comfort in books about Hitlerite diplomacy, such as Erich Kordt's *Wahn und Wirklichkeit*, which assures them that Hitler really did run the show and no one else was much to blame; the ex-officers who throng the Western Zones may seek consolation in pamphlets such as that just published with huge success by General Halder, *Hitler als Feldherr*, which utters no single word against aggressive war but limits itself to pointing out that the German generals would certainly have won the last example but for Hitler's mistakes. For these older men there seems no real hope of enlightenment. It is with the Corporal Sauers, if only they can burrow their way to the truth, that hope lies.

The obstacles are tremendous, for the older generation, blessed now by the Allies in the sacred name of anti-Bolshevism and rocklike in their incapacity for learning anything new, are in command. The fiasco of "denazification" is bound to have its full effect before long. What is Corporal Sauer to think of trials for war crimes, for instance, when these become the mockery they are today? The Bielefeld court for the trial of crimes against humanity was lately found to have 31 ex-Party-members out of a judicial team of 33. What sort of educational influence is a man like Hartnacke, the first Nazi Minister of Education in Saxony, able to exercise? And yet Herr Minister Hartnacke was lately the principal speaker at a paedagogical congress.

More powerful than anything else, though, is the formative influence now being exercised by "anti-Bolshevism." There is, as Walter Dirks, one of the able editors of the *Frankfurter Hefte*, a distinguished Left-wing Catholic periodical, lately expressed it, "a profound inner relationship between Fascism and anti-Bolshevism."

Day in, day out, Western Germany is flooded and filled with the slogans, insinuations, and distortions of the anti-Bolshevist campaign. No one who merely took in the tone of the West German newspapers could possibly deduce that the Western Powers had won a war against Germany in company with the Soviet Union. *Die Zeit* of Hamburg, perhaps the most insiduously subversive newspaper in the Western Zones, is at present running a serial by a Russian emigré about the state of Moscow during the German assault of 1941. "It is no business of ours," runs the introduction, "to explain the reasons why the announcement of German victory, which was awaited, hoped, or feared by the whole world, failed to come. All we wish to show is how, at the moment when the power of the Soviets in their capital seemed broken, the mask fell . . . the dictatorship lost control . . . [Party members] suddenly saw everything with new eyes." If only it hadn't been for Hitler's mistakes . . .

Many, and perhaps most, British officials in Germany appear to think this anti-Bolshevism a healthy sign of democratic re-birth. Yet one thing about this slowly forming "German mind" seems already clear: that anti-Bolshevism is now in the way of convincing the mass of the politically illiterate—as nothing else, perhaps, could have convinced them—that Germany has no political lessons to learn from the West. Hitler may have made mistakes: very good, but the West . . .? Who enabled the Russians to enter Germany? And who is now most bitterly complaining? Corporal Sauer has a great deal against him.

Frankfurt, July. BASIL DAVIDSON

THE LOST DOMINION

TIME has dealt unkindly with St. John's, the capital of Newfoundland. It would be hard to find another city in Canada or the United States that showed more evident signs of decrepitude. Except in the main Water Street, the wooden buildings of the water-front and the old centre of the town are rotting and unpainted, while even the best thoroughfares are potholed and undermined by water. Most of the side streets in the older part are mere grit tracks, while the houses that line them are more grimy than any slum I have seen in other Canadian towns. On the outskirts, topping the surrounding arc of hills, lies a suburb of more prosperous houses, but even here a drab appearance is given by the skimpy plots of short grass and bushes which usually serve as gardens.

Everywhere obtrudes the evidence of the economic depression through which the island has been passing for the last two decades. Seasonal and permanent unemployment is great, and the number of shabby men at the street corners reminds one of Rhondda towns in the early 1930s. Except for the tall policemen and the owners of the opulent cars which appear occasionally in these sombre streets, the people look ill-fed and unhealthy. There are four or five good stores, one surprisingly well-stocked bookshop, one drug-store in the American style; but the rest of the shops are mean and seedy, like the corner stores of slum streets in English industrial towns. Their contents are dusty and unappetising, yellowing local-grown cabbages and grey salt fish taking their place beside the canned fruits and sawdust-like cakes from the town bakeries. By the water-front men stand with dirty barrels full of seal flippers, the colour of clotted blood, which are eaten by some of the poor people and are usually well thumbed before they are eventually bought and taken away.

All these are the symptoms of an acute economic disequilibrium. Like some West Indian colonies, Newfoundland has concentrated on a very restricted range of industries, whose vicissitudes have had a disproportionate effect on the living conditions of its people. Only a tiny proportion of the food consumed, except for fish, has ever been produced locally. This has been due partly to climatic conditions and the poor soil of the areas near the larger towns; but much could have been done to increase livestock and market gardening. The emphasis, however, has always been on fishing and the wood-pulp industry, and only recently has anything like a full survey of agricultural possibilities been attempted. It has shown that there might be a considerable extension of cattle-raising, which would help greatly to adjust the economic balance.

As things are, the island is peculiarly susceptible to crisis. The shrinkage of European markets for fish, lumber and pulp has produced a persistent condition of chronic depression, which the half-hearted measures of local and Imperial administrators have failed to improve. The general standard of living is markedly lower than that of most of North America. A recent Commission on the fish-curing industry recommended minimum wages of 40 cents an hour for men and 30 cents for women; several establishments have not yet reached this level. Longshoremen receive up to a dollar an hour for dangerous work, but this is exceptional; for most workers wages range between 40 and 50 cents an hour. White-collar workers are little better off, and many teachers still earn less than £250 a year. At the same time, the cost of necessities is high; butter, eggs, bacon and meat are all more expensive than in Canada, the differences varying from 15 per cent. to 30 per cent. In these circumstances there is naturally widespread malnutrition, with a high tuberculosis rate.

The latest attempt to solve Newfoundland's problems has been through the confederation with Canada. Opinions among the islanders are mixed on this question. The Dominion Government has provided great inducements: taxes have fallen, family allowances have been introduced, the authorities at Ottawa have subsidised items of public expenditure, while economic integration with Canada may offset some of the effects of past specialisation in Newfoundland industries. On the other hand, there are clearly certain strategic and nationalist motives behind the Canadian attitude, and many Newfoundlanders think that the improvement in their economic conditions may be accompanied by a loss of regional integrity and independence.

GEORGE WOODCOCK

SO THEY SAY . . .

WHETHER we are better or worse off with less sugar and (presumably) less sweets, and more butter, meat, and bacon, is a matter of individual preference. But it is interesting to note the newspapers' gentle shaping of their readers' thoughts on these matters, as contained in the headlines to Sir Stafford Cripps's "crisis" speech in the House last week.

The Times stuck loftily to the point:

£100 A YEAR CUT IN DOLLAR IMPORTS—SAVINGS ON SUGAR, TOBACCO AND RAW MATERIALS

The *News Chronicle* stressed the news angle:

SWEETS TO GO BACK ON THE RATION—ANOTHER OUNCE OF BUTTER AND THREEPENCE ON THE JOINT

The *Daily Worker* came as near as it ever will to complete objectivity:

LESS SUGAR BUT MORE MEAT

The *Daily Herald* decided that the good news deserved to come first:

UP: MEAT, BUTTER, BACON—DOWN: TOBACCO, SUGAR

The *Daily Mirror* also assessed its readers' interests:

MORE BUTTER, BACON, MEAT—LESS SUGAR (2 OZ.) AND TOBACCO

Others decided that it was a bad bargain:

Daily Telegraph:

SWEETS RATIONED—SUGAR DOWN TO 8 OZ

Daily Graphic:

DOLLAR AXE HITS SUGAR, TOBACCO

Daily Mail:

FIRST CUTS BY CRIPPS

Daily Express:

THE FIRST INSTALMENT—SWEETS RATIONED AGAIN—SUGAR ON WAR LEVEL—AUTUMN CUT IN CIGARETTES

Diagrammatical Immaterialism

Evening News, July 16:

> Mr. Victor Feather, T.U.C. assistant secretary, said at Dorchester to-day that the leaders of the Communist Party knew that a strong, free Trade Union movement was an insurmountable barrier against their attempts to bring about economic chaos.

Reynold's News, July 17:

> Mr. Feather said that the Tory leaders knew that a strong and free trade union movement was an insurmountable barrier against their attempts to bring about economic chaos.

Aids to Circulation

1: Your Own.

Sunday Pictorial, July 17:

> 450 MEN AND WOMEN TELL THEIR SEX SECRETS . . . the most intimate report ever published in a British newspaper . . .

Cross-headings:

> The Unmarried — Satisfied — Infidelity — Prostitutes—Perversions — Day-Dreams — Normal or . . . (including a poll in which "11 per cent. said they were abnormal in miscellaneous ways").

2: Someone Else's.

Reynold's News, July 10:

> (*Tom Driberg's Column*)—Better than any joke ever published in it [*Punch*] is the astonishing fact—so perfect a symbol of English bourgeois hypocrisy—that, concealed in the intricacies of the cover designed for it by the early Victorian artist, Dicky Doyle, is a monstrous obscenity. This has not been changed [in the new cover].

Touché !

Mr. A. Marlowe (Cons., Brighton), to Mr. Aneurin Bevan (July 14), following the Minister of Health's complaint of newspaper misrepresentation of the free-clothes-for-patients' scheme:

> Was this gross misrepresentation made by "the most prostituted press in the world," or the press which is "inferior to none"?

AUTOLYCUS

BLOOD SPORTS

PEOPLE who read the papers and listen to the radio will not have forgotten a discussion, provoked by two privately sponsored Bills, concerning the morality of blood sports and the propriety of making them illegal. And of such people a good many I dare say were struck, as I was, by the lack on both sides of rational arguments. Though striking, this deficiency was by no means surprising, seeing that sentimentalists—and in their own way sportsmen are apt to be as sentimental as beast-lovers—seldom find it necessary to give intellectual support to their emotions. I use the term "beast-lover" by way of protest against the misuse of the word "humanitarian" applied to people who apparently care more for brutes than for human beings.

When Macaulay said that "the Puritan hated bear-baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectators" he meant to poke fun at the Puritans, and he did—excellent literary fun: as a philosopher, he was paying them a compliment. The only philosophical reason for condemning blood-sports is that they give pleasure, and that the state of mind of a man or woman taking pleasure in killing is bad. A most reputable—in my opinion the most reputable—school of ethical thought holds that human states of mind alone are good or bad in themselves. And most, though perhaps not all, philosophers of this school would hold that the state of mind of a human being taking pleasure in killing was bad. To say that the state of mind of one who kills is necessarily bad is as absurd as to say that it is necessarily good. The state of mind of a professional butcher who is killing a pig without pleasure or pain to himself is as innocent as that of a professional footballer. It is the pleasure that gives ethical significance to the action.

If human states of mind alone are good or bad as ends, the pain and fear felt by the quarry (incidentally we know very little about what animals do feel; we argue from analogy, and arguments from analogy are to be received with caution), the pain and fear, I say, philosophically considered, are of no importance save as means. Let us agree that they are means to bad in so far as they are means to bad state of mind: in themselves they are insignificant. You do not agree? Then you must take the consequences. Arguing from analogy, we infer that animals slaughtered

for food feel pain and fear—in my time I have given a hand at a pig-killing. Very well, reply the beast-lovers, we will be vegetarians. But men of science have said—I know they will say almost anything—that vegetables are as likely as animals to feel pain, that lettuces positively wince when they are being cut for a salad. It may be so: what is certain is that you cannot walk through a field without killing or maiming insects and perhaps some reptiles—worms, grubs, caterpillars. Think of national rat week, and the campaigns against mice and lice and fleas; to say nothing of such small deer as are put to a lingering death by disinfectants. No, if it is killing and giving pain that you object to, you had better give up trying to live. If blood-sports are wrong, it is not because of the pain but of the pleasure. Human states of mind, which alone are good or bad as ends, are what matter in this argument.

Sportsmen, unless they happen to be particularly honest, will say they do not take pleasure in killing, that it has nothing to do with their enjoyment. I must speak for myself. I have ridden to fox-hounds and followed a drag; I have shot most British game-birds and practised at clay-pigeons. I shall not pretend that I found the drag as exciting as fox-hunting, though the galloping and jumping were better. And, seriously, will shooting-men maintain that, were clay-pigeons to be sprung from the most unlikely places, in the most beautiful surroundings (a point invariably stressed), offering a variety of difficult shots (most of which I should miss), will they maintain that pulverizing these evasive objects would give at all the same thrill as that given by bringing down a pheasant? I will not. A part, not all, but a part of my pleasure in shooting is derived from killing; and it is not a pretty pleasure.

Sportsmen, I suspect, are mostly disingenuous when they protest that they take no pleasure in killing, and that to shoot with a gun or a camera would be all one to them. But they are right when they protest vehemently against the charge, too often made in the heat of controversy, that they take pleasure in giving pain. People who say that are either ignorant or dishonest. No sportsman, *qua* sportsman, takes pleasure in giving pain, though he may do so in his capacity of lover, husband, parent, administrator or magistrate. Anyone who has enjoyed a lovers' quarrel, or watched an incompetent schoolmaster at work or a civil servant dealing with "applicants," knows that in giving pain there can be a great deal of pleasure. But is there a sportsman alive who had not rather kill his bird than wound? A sportsman hates to prick a bird, and still more to leave one that is hard hit to die a lingering death. To avoid doing so he will lose time and temper looking for a runner; whereas, if he enjoyed giving pain, he ought to be revelling in the thought of present and future suffering. It may be fair to say that for the sake of his pleasure in killing he is willing to take a chance of wounding, and that such a state of mind is not to be commended. To say that he takes pleasure in giving pain is to talk nonsense—and worse.

If, as approved philosophy maintains, human states of mind alone are valuable as ends, the question of happiness or unhappiness of the hunted is irrelevant to a philosophical discussion. Nevertheless, in arguments about sport the question is raised, and generally, in my opinion, receives a thoughtless answer. In the first place, it is well to remember that, were it not for hunting and shooting, the majority of foxes and game-birds alive at this moment in the British Isles would not have been born. As for the fox, had squires and farmers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries taken no pleasure in pursuing him, probably, like the wolf, he would have become extinct; while, so numerous are the natural enemies of pheasants, partridges and grouse that man, for his own amusement of course, protects these birds. Game must be "preserved." Thus, the question that would present itself to a thoughtful fox or pheasant is much the same as that which presents itself to thoughtful men and women—Do I wish I had not been born? "I do" is a perfectly reasonable reply; but suicide statistics suggest that it is one few people can give honestly. The lives of most foxes, game-birds and human beings are, so far as we can judge, a mixture of pain and pleasure, with an unhappy ending. (To hear some spoil-sports talk you might think there was nothing in life but the ending.) It is to be observed, moreover, that the natural end of a human being—especially in an "institution-ridden" State—bad as it may be, is not so bad as the natural end of a bird. Townees, and most modern crusaders come from the towns, have no notion of what an old bird suffers. Its natural end is often hastened by persecution from the younger males of the species and generally accomplished by a spell of hard weather during which the patriarch dies, slowly, of cold and hunger. From this fate the sportsman saves as many game-birds as he can. Indeed, it may be said that when game is reared, as well as being preserved, the life of the cock-pheasant approximates to that ideal held up to our admiration and envy by ancient poets and philosophers. Born in security and comfort, well fed, well housed, well tended, the young bird, on the threshold of maturity, is sent out to enjoy the ease and beauty and abundance of mid-summer and autumn. His enemies are destroyed or kept at a distance. He is monarch of all he surveys. He knows not hunger nor fear nor winter; for when the leaf falls he falls. Those whom the Gods love die young. As for the hens that survive, they are protected and nourished during the lean months, and in the spring enjoy the attentions of handsome, albeit inconstant, husbands; later they may or may not find happiness in raising a family; when their powers begin to fail they are delivered from the horrors of a natural death.

Such considerations, comforting though they may be to sentimentalists on either side of the argument, do not, of course, make the state of mind of one who is taking pleasure in killing any better; and the question remains—Should we attempt to eliminate bad states of mind by prohibiting the means? Should we attempt to make people virtuous—or what we are pleased to consider virtuous—by Act of Parliament? Neither philosophy nor sentimentality is wanted here, but tolerance and common sense. Consider the activities which, in the opinion of many high-minded reformers, are direct means to bad states of mind: drinking, smoking, gambling, fornicating. There are people who would make all these illegal for the one and only valid reason anti-blood-sportsmen can adduce for making hunting and shooting illegal, i.e., that they are vile pleasures, or, philosophically speaking, means to bad states of mind. To the Puritan's list let me add a few on my own account. I consider bad the state of mind of one revelling in the crooning of crooners, or, for that matter, of one taking pleasure in many of the films, plays, novels, songs and picture-papers now in vogue; I consider vile the state of mind of orators or publicists striving to provoke race or class or national hatred, and not much better the state of those who enjoy reading or listening to them; I am far from sure that I can approve the state of mind of my friend the editor of this journal when he is writing, and enjoying writing, a leading article—always supposing that it is possible to enjoy such activities. Shall I then agitate for the suppression by law of these means to so much present and potential ill? Or shall I stick to the motto which, though you may think it comes oddly from a sportsman, is the motto of all civilised men and women—Live and let Live.

CLIVE BELL

LETTERS FROM TWO ISLANDS

Isle of Britain

. . . Several very busy days in London—play, film, opera, symphony orchestra, journalism. Karsh, the photographer, invaded Albany one morning, turning my dining room into a miniature film studio, and kept me grinning in this glare for about forty minutes. An amusing chap and an astonishingly good photographer; but this remains for me an embarrassing and wearisome business, which I am right to avoid as long as I can. The people who photograph best are those who thoroughly like the look of themselves, as Shaw must do—and quite right, too. Though I shamelessly applaud much of what I do, I do not admire what I am, and this of course includes my appearance. So when I am being photographed I pull faces, hoping to look like somebody else, and this worries the photographers. Karsh's trick was to ask me, at the last moment, to look at him, and then give me such a droll appealing stare that I had to grin. It may work.

These days have meant much hasty travelling within the postal areas of W.1, S.W.1, W.C.2 and E.C.4. As I stand about, waving at taxis and growing anxious at the loss of time, I notice yet again all these new powerful cars, like flattened steel toads, whose ownership is a mystery to me. Most of them do not look as if they belong to diplomats, government departments, rich American visitors. Then to whom do they belong? How are they imported, paid for, fed with all the petrol they must consume? For what strange grandees are they purring or roaring? Is there some mysterious new order of highly privileged men, so important that the regulations which govern the rest of us mean nothing to them? If I stared long enough at these cars, would I catch a glimpse of an unreported and hidden *élite*?

Notice, my friend, that term *élite*. It is always turning up now. It has caught my eye, in different contexts, half a dozen times in the last two days. Should there be an *élite*? Is our new society suffering from the lack of one? And so on. As far as I am concerned, the term itself is unfortunate, for I bristle at the sight of it. It suggests, none too happily, an all-round superiority. Now I have met men and women who thought they were better at everything than the rest of humanity, but I never agreed with them. We are told that a community in which no class has sufficient leisure, wealth, power, to cultivate the art of living, will soon begin to decay, not only culturally but morally. We need, it is said, a class enjoying special privileges that are not narrowly functional—that is, do not merely go with the job. The delicate flame must be guarded. But it is not clear to me how the flame-guarders, if given time and money on a non-functional basis, can be prevented from wasting that time and money cooking their bodies on the Riviera, sitting about in night clubs, and organising idiotic parties. (The

publicity given to such activities has played an under-rated part in our political life.) And I feel that this conception of an *élite*, aloof from the crowd, fails to understand the true spirit of this age, which compels men and women fit to be members of an *élite* to refuse to belong to one. The very spirit they wish to guard rejects the idea of aloofness and superiority. Oh!—of course they often feel tired, sick at heart, nauseated by the cheap values, the rubbish, the mob antics; and need a holiday away from the dust and sweat. But they are haunted by a sense of responsibility. Fine living at other people's expense soon stops looking fine. They cannot cancel their membership in the community. They cannot keep on taking without giving. They suspect that only ivory heads can live long in ivory towers. This is a difficult and dangerous age. If you are determined to keep your values untainted by the roaring mob, then those values may go rotten on you. If you take them down into the market-place, you may lose them in the vast hurly-burly. But that is the risk that must be taken, and as yet, I feel, the men and women who take that risk are the *élite* who must never be known as an *élite*.

Have you read Nigel Balchin's new novel, *A Sort of Traitors*? I stayed awake much too late, the other night, reading it at a sitting. A faulty job, without his usual adroit construction. Yet I had to finish it, while steadily disapproving of it more and more; and that says much for Balchin. He is, of course, an up-to-the-minute writer, very artful in his use of a strictly contemporary tone and flavour. His novels are put together like film scripts: a succession of short scenes with curt dialogue; quick dissolve from Lab to Pub. The backgrounds—improvised research labs, crowded saloon bars, dingy flats, cinemas, Whitehall offices—are typical of our post-war London. So is the familiar cast of characters—proud muddled young scientists, weary old professors, anxious girls living on gin-and-lime and baked beans, smooth and false official types, dubious pub intriguers, members of M.I.5 on the prowl. For all I know to the contrary, he may sit at home in Kent and wildly invent the whole thing. But while I am reading him, he takes me in. This, I feel, is what goes on. This is how scientific workers—not great scientists, who are intuitive and imaginative men—live these days and how they see life.

And it won't do. I am glad, grumbler though I am, that I am just one of the laymen whom these scientific workers patronise in their thoughts. For they seem to lead a wretchedly scrawny sort of existence, not because they are generally hard up (though they could do with more money and should have it) but because they seem to be imprisoned by their own narrow outlook. As if they were living on the edge of the Grand Canyon but were both short-sighted and colour-blind. Mind you, I am not describing these men as they actually are—I don't know enough about them—but as Balchin in his convincing fashion presents them.

The trouble with these Balchin characters is that their lives appear to have no more depth than a film has. They are short of a dimension. Their outlook is so bleakly non-symbolic. This enables Balchin and his characters to dispense with a great deal of gush and gas and cloudy rhetoric; but what is left, it seems to me, is a very drab little huddle of existence, in which nothing casts a long shadow, pierces the heart with bitter sweetness, lights up the mind with a strange sunlight; in which everybody for ever trudges from job to pub, goes joylessly from Whitehall to a West End restaurant, and can never go home because the very idea of home, itself symbolic, has vanished.

These sharply contemporary novels have the same effect on me that those books by American scientific journalists and technocrats used to have. If this is Scientific Man taking possession of the earth, I feel, then let me slip away, disappearing with the gaudy nonsense, the emotive twaddle, the huge irrational urges, the pathetic anthropomorphic illusions that have given me such delight, before he assumes full control of this dwindling greying planet. If, as I am sometimes told, to have a dislike of this wiry caricature of living is to be a reactionary, then I am a reactionary; for I will thank no man for keeping me alive and offering me a few more gadgets if at the same time he proposes to empty my mind of all colour and wonder and inexplicable joy. I promptly shall be told that nothing of this sort is intended. No doubt. But nevertheless this is what the Balchins, with their shrewd contemporary touch, show me. And we live in a world increasingly dominated by America and Russia, and in both these empires, it seems to me, the men in power, the piper-payers and tune-callers, are moving rapidly towards this flatland of the spirit, this non-symbolic outlook, this conditioned narrowness of living. There are even signs of it here, among the smart boys working the machine, though there are few people who live such intensely symbolic lives as the English.

A letter from a popular writer of thrillers, who, after telling me I am a great this and that, all very flattering, goes on to say—"And yet you write for a paper like the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION; in my opinion a poisonous rag. I don't get it." I shall have to tell him that the answer is very simple, namely, that our opinions happen to differ. Perhaps I ought to add that we might all get along rather better at a difficult time if we stopped bellowing nonsense about poisonous rags. After too many years of it, I am weary of this kind of talk. Even when I know that a newspaper is being used as a mere megaphone by its proprietor, that it is being edited by a man who has a contempt for his readers, that the policy of the newspaper has no regard for the truth, that it persists in black-listing or smearing men on the other side, that it will say anything to make its sillier readers feel comfortable or superior, that it has never once acknowledged that it was wrong or that any of its opponents were right, that every issue of it is likely to do more harm than good to the public mind, even then I would not talk about poisonous rags.

And—so strangely are we made—even as I write these lines to you there moves unbidden through my mind, like a remote glimpse of majestic beings in some other world, the large opening theme of the Schumann E Flat Symphony, the Third—isn't it?

J. B. PRIESTLEY

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

From "The New Statesman," July, 1924

Titles for Sale.

One day we may have a democracy which in a fit of iconoclasm will abolish all titles of honour. But, while we are what we are, we must be content with such profit as we get out of the system. We get hospital beds and parks and other useful things (besides the more doubtful blessing of funds for political parties)—and all for the price of letting a number of simple souls humbug themselves into believing they are important because they are called Sir John This and My Lady That. All we need ask is that the deal should be carried out in an honest and tolerably open way. Colonel Parkinson has done well in insisting that the standards of the "Honours" trade should be at least as high as those of the grocery trade.

The Arts and Entertainment

WOULDN'T IT BE FUN!

THERE are two Tyrone Guthries, as there are at least two of most of us. There is Mr. Tyrone Guthrie, one of our leading producers, an original artist with a most imaginative mind, a great feeling for the visual, a highly developed sense of theatre. Then there is his *alter ego*, Master Tony Guthrie, let us call him, an inky urchin, with a fourth form sense of humour and a violent self-destructive streak: the kind of urchin who, having completed a lovely neat fair copy, can never resist the fleeting impulse to spatter it with blobs of ink, if nothing more offensive comes to hand. These two Guthries fight it out in the new production of *Henry VIII*, the last play to be added to the Stratford Repertory this season. It begins as a close race. Or rather—more exactly—those who have put their money on "producer's theatre," and on Mr. Guthrie the artist, are able for quite a long time to remain hopeful. The urchin keeps putting himself in front, it is true; but the artist is also running magnificently. Style, they used to tell us, will always win in the end. And Mr. Guthrie gives a great display of style. But, as so often, they told us wrong: style doesn't win in the end. By the three-quarters mark it is no use even hoping: it is clear that the urchin will win in an easy canter.

By tradition *Henry VIII* is a producer's play. Its pageants, masques and pomps invite a rich use of crowd movement and display: Mr. Guthrie is a master of this. Miss Tanya Moisewitch has provided dresses both appropriate and enchanting, rich velvety blacks, greys and yellows for the Court in contrast to the scarlets and purples of the Church. The eye, as is common with this school of production, is amply indulged. Then again, though the main characters in the play are rather sketchily drawn, and though the dramatic interest is in danger of running down towards the end unless it is carefully managed, there are five or six excellent dramatic scenes; three of them at least are handled by Mr. Guthrie with a sure touch so as to bring out the maximum of tension. There are here, in short, the elements of a really fine production.

But that is to forget little Master Guthrie, who is also a producer. He is the leader of what we may call the "Wouldn't-it-be-fun (just for a change)" school. Master Guthrie is continuously being visited by bright, clever, silly notions. And Mr. Guthrie senior, like an over-indulgent parent, never seems able to deny this tiresome child anything. Wouldn't it be fun if, when Cranmer is making the great prophecy speech on one side of the stage, the nurse carrying the infant Princess Elizabeth on the other side, should have a fit of sneezing? Oh wouldn't it be fun! And in this silly gag goes. Wouldn't it be fun if, in the Court scene, our attention should be distracted from the speeches by the noise of the scriveners driving their quills over the parchment? And then couldn't Henry come ponderously down from his throne and push a clerk off his stool? And couldn't someone else imitate him and do it again? "But aren't the speeches rather hard to follow meanwhile?" Never mind. Anyhow they're very boring. We must try to *make* something of this scene.

It is really the most perverse production. For every felicity an ink-blob. For every build-up a clever/silly let-down. I tried hard to explain it all to myself as some sort of attempt to catch an Elizabethan lack of sophistication in the middle of their pomp. I tried hard not to be distracted by the fidgetings, the bum-scratchings, the gossipings, the restless human interest business that keeps filling every corner of the stage—choir-masters tumbling over backwards, old men being chased like frightened hens, first gentleman's comic teeth, and so on, and so on. I strained my ears while important speeches were mumbled by

characters turned deliberately up-stage. And I even extracted for a time a great deal of pleasure from the performance by a most determined Will to Enjoy and a firm belief in Mr. Guthrie the artist.

But finally I had to give in. The first mortal blow came with the brilliantly handled climax to the court scene where Henry perceives that the cardinals are playing some deep ecclesiastical game of their own : and the shadow at last falls on Wolsey. For the King suddenly summons over to his side from among the indiscriminate crowd at the back, Wolsey's successor-to-be, Cranmer. Excellently done, but for one revealing detail: the Cranmer is made a funny character with a facial twitch. And then it looked as if the producer were simply chucking in his hand, and not even trying to tackle the problem of play as a whole. He is just having fun, and will treat the closing scenes as mere burlesque. And so he did—the King degenerating into a sort of Charles Laughton clown, and the vital scene of his overlooking the Council's treatment of Cranmer wantonly cut. For with a weak Cranmer, it wouldn't make sense.

That brings us to the interval, after which there is another brilliant patch which revives our hopes, that magnificent scene where King and nobles begin the baiting of Wolsey. We are left free for almost ten whole minutes to admire Mr. Quayle's ponderous but cunning King, Mr. Andrews' purse-lipped Wolsey and to feel the drama mounting, mounting, mounting. But is it allowed to be crowned with the fine ranting rhetoric of the " Farewell to Greatness " passage ? Oh no. We must have something different. So they decide to whisper this speech into what used to be the orchestra pit (which is now occupied by halberdiers and comic choirmen, waiting to dash on).

On my way home, with this piece of clever/silly production very much in my mind, I decided to start a new school of " Wouldn't-it-be-fun (just for a change) " dramatic criticism which would just pop down any clever/silly idea that came into its head. For instance I began imagining the dialogue at the rehearsal of this scene as it might be invented by a " Wouldn't-it-be-fun (just for a change) " dramatic critic.

Mr. Andrews, an experienced Shakespearian actor, advances towards the footlights and delivers a speech in the fine musical voice with which nature has endowed him.

Mr. Andrews : Farewell, a long farewell to all my greatness ! This is the state of man ; today he puts forth
The tender leaves of hope, tomorrow blossoms,
And bears his blushing honours . .

Mr. Guthrie : No ! No ! Sorry, old boy, we can't have *that*.

Mr. A. : No ?

Mr. G. : No ! Leon Quartermaine speaks a whole speech straight in the first act as Buckingham.

Mr. A. : Sorry, old boy. I thought this was the big speech.

Mr. G. : So it is, old boy. That's the trouble. Everyone will know it. We must do something *different*.

Mr. A. : What do you suggest ?

Mr. G. : Let's think now. Something *new* . . . . You couldn't be drunk, I suppose ?

Mr. A. : Well . . . .

Mr. G. : No, I've got it. A stroke.

Mr. A. : A stroke ?

Mr. G. : Yes, you die quite soon after, remember ? Have a stroke at . . . let me see, " Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition. . . ."

Mr. A. : That comes at the very end, old boy. There are about a hundred lines to get through first.

Mr. G. : So there are . . . Tell you what. Just sit down where you are and throw 'em away.

Mr. A. : All of them ?

Mr. G. : Why not ? Wouldn't it be fun ! Just sit down. There. That's right. Tap with your ring on the floor . . . to show stress, old boy. That's it. Now—throw it away.

Mr. A. : (*Mumbles three lines before the producer interrupts*).

Mr. G. : Sorry to keep stopping you, old boy.

Mr. A. : That's all right.

Mr. G. : There's just one thing. You're keeping in the rhythm. All those bloody feminine endings, you know.

Mr. A. : Sorry, old boy. They seem to come quite naturally.

Mr. G. : I dare they say they do. But don't let 'em, break 'em up. Smash 'em. Throw it away *in bits*, old boy. Throw it away *in bits*. Take it again.

Mr. A. : (*Mumbles three more lines before the producer interrupts*).

Mr. G. : Sorry, old boy. Can you bear one more interruption ?

Mr. A. : Of course, old boy.

Mr. G. : That's much better, much better. Hardly recognisable. But just one more thing.

Mr. A. : Yes, old boy ?

Mr. G. : Look ! I'm sitting way back in the third row of the stalls and I can still *hear* quite a lot.

Mr. A. : God ! Sorry, old boy. I'll keep it down.

Mr. G. : If you would, old boy.

Mr. A. : Fair . . . . . great . . . . state . . . puts . . . . hopes . . . . . blushing . . . . . him. The . . . . . a . . . . . .

Mr. G. : Splendid, old boy ! Hold that. Perfect. Just enough to tantalise 'em without giving 'em a clue. Miss Wynyard !

Stage Manager : Calling Miss Wynyard ! !

Mr. G. : Ah, Miss Wynyard. Would you mind coming and listening to this, darling. This is more or less how I want your death scene to go . . .

And go, more or less like that, the death scene did. If I were a real " Wouldn't-it-be-fun (just for a change) " man, I should now relate my dream. For in this school we are never content with just one clever/silly notion. We put them all in. As it is, I will only tell, because it is very relevant, the part where the dream became a nightmare. I was in a " producer's theatre," charged with an important message from the whole audience to the Director. I fought my way to his office through Romeos with false noses, Hamlets carrying Gladstone bags and Macbeths with stutters. The Director was charming. What could he do for me ? No, he didn't in the least mind my being a dramatic critic. He always read them, and tried to profit by their advice. I delivered my message. He cupped his hand round his ear and said " What ? " I repeated it. He still couldn't hear. I shouted and still he couldn't. That was the nightmare. This theatre had on it the curse of inaudibility. I woke up before he ever did hear what I had come to say. But I remembered it in the morning, this heartfelt cry from the whole audience I had been charged to deliver ; and I write it down now in case these words should catch someone's eye at Stratford : PLEASE MAY WE BE ALLOWED TO HEAR THE WORDS?

T. C. WORSLEY

SPRING SYMPHONY

A LARGE-SCALE new work by Benjamin Britten, his *Spring Symphony*, Op. 44, has been one of the main events of this year's Holland Festival. It was performed on two successive nights, at Amsterdam and Scheveningen, by the Concertgebouw Orchestra under Eduard van Beinum, with the Dutch Radio Choir, a contingent of boys from Rotterdam, and three soloists : Jo Vincent, the Dutch soprano, and our own Kathleen Ferrier and Peter Pears. The performance, so far as one could judge from a Third Programme relay accompanied by the usual interruptions, must have been brilliant. The thorough musicianship of conductor and orchestra could of course be taken for granted ; what astonished me was the assurance and verve with which these Dutch singers tackled a variety of difficult English lyrics, ranging from the thirteenth century down to the present day.

Britten's Symphony contains no purely instrumental music, and I foresee that much ink will be spilled over the academic question of its right to the title. It falls into four sections, corresponding roughly to the four movements of a symphony ; the composer has grouped some fourteen poems of all periods according to four moods or pictorial schemes. The first and longest group begins with an orchestral image of winter, all icicles and numbness, which the sun is invited by the chorus to dispel. In the Spenser and Nashe settings which follow, the onset of spring is felt : the cuckoo sings out (astonishingly, on the brass), but all is still rough and rude, the rhythms heavy, fingers red with the cold—until suddenly a galaxy of bird-song breaks from all three soloists, as though from a thicket (here Jo Vincent excelled herself). The next piece, a combined setting of Peele's " Whenas the rye reach to the chin " and John Clare's *Driving Boy*, provided the most captivating single episode in a captivating score ; it was here that the boys' choir made its first entrance. Most listeners, and most composers, too, think of boys' voices in terms of a soft, ethereal, pious, floating quality of sound—" *et ô ces voix d'enfants chantant dans la coupole*." Years ago, in his *Ceremony of Carols*, Britten showed an unecclesiastical preference for the raw, cheeky din of trebles singing with unpursed lips low down in the scale ; and both Wagner and Verlaine would have had a shock if they had heard the sound of those Rotterdam kids, the other night, as they came charging into the solemn Concertgebouw (they might almost have shinned up the wall and through the windows) with a raw, naughty, don't-care-a-rap E flat unison tune. "Strawberries swimming in the cream, And Schoolboys playing in the stream." When Miss Ferrier took up Clare's ditty of the Driving Boy, those same boys, unless I am much mistaken, were made to whistle ; and then they came splashing back again with the strawberries and cream and the larky snatch of tune. It sounds like broad farce, but it was a passage of heavenly innocence and poetry, such as only Britten could have imagined.

Not everything seemed, at a first hearing, quite so pointful and inevitable. The setting for contralto of Herrick's poem to the violets sounded too heavy for the delicate short lines, and one or two stanzas from a poem by Auden proved recalcitrant (as his more intellectual verses are apt to be) to the sensuous demands of music : there was even a remote and in the context unsuitable reference to pre-war politics. Both Herrick and Auden came in the second part, which was reflective and nocturnal, and contained a lovely setting for tenor of Vaughan's lines in praise of evening rain, with the vocal line surrounded by clusters of repeated notes, like raindrops, on the strings. The third movement, corresponding to the Scherzo of a symphony, was full of gaiety and impatient youthful love, expressed in rhythmic exuberance and outbursts of highly original orchestration ; placed in the middle, like a Trio, was a charming A major duet for soprano and tenor to Peele's *Song of Oenone and Paris*. For his finale the composer launched boldly into a genial and extravert C major, a piece of public jollification, with lolloping six-eight rhythms, based on the long passage from the end of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, which begins " London to thee I do present the merry month of May." The solo tenor leads off, and the musical forces gather round him, but the sense of mere thickness and overcrowding is beautifully avoided ; there is none of that remorseless piling up of a climax for its own sake which is the bane of the English and German choral traditions. Everything is as clean as a whistle ; the colours have a mediaeval gaiety, the feeling a direct Chaucerian freshness. The rhythms tighten as the banners crowd together and the Londoners set out, not in a march, but " with scarfs and garters as you please . . . by twenty and by twenty, to Hogsdon or to Newington, where ale and cakes are plenty." The children are there too, lusty and low down in their registers as usual, with " Soomer is icoomen in." " And so, my friends, I cease," announces the tenor ; and so indeed the composer does cease—with one loud, clear, tremendously unequivocal C major chord for the entire orchestra.

I won't vouch for the accuracy, in detail, of these first impressions ; but I feel certain that

when (the sooner the better) we get some London performances of this *Spring Symphony*, and a score, and perhaps a set of gramophone records, it will be seen to mark a new stage in the composer's career. His old power of inventing musical patterns to symbolise an intensely personal and pictorial vision is shown again, even perhaps more vividly than before; what is new is the geniality, breadth and accessibility—in a word, the maturity. It is as though the springtime of his genius—raw, brilliant and tender—were itself also about to ripen into high summer.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

RADIO NOTES

To lie fallow from time to time is a form of occupational therapy, which is probably indispensable. Just about now one feels tempted to prescribe it for broadcasting. It is not that things are bad, nor that there is any noticeable fall below the expected level, but rather that tiredness somwhere has crept in, there is a failure to crack the whip, or else a failure to respond to the crack of it. The drama of the Spoken Word warps and curls up like shirt-collars in the dogdays. No doubt it is criticism too which grows jaded. Looking back over the last ten days, wishing to be both just and comprehensive, I cannot think of anything which has been exciting, or indeed roused strong feeling of any sort. The thing which comes first to mind is *Wild Decembers*, Miss Clemence Dane's play about the Brontës. Perhaps one expected too much. The representation of genius requires genius. Miss Dane has an exceedingly pleasant and sympathetic voice for the air, (not unlike Miss Rose Macaulay's), and one was prepared to be won over by it to the various scenes which she introduced. But those scenes, wherever intensity was attempted, scraped on sensibilities like an old gramophone-needle. They were scraped yet worse by the voice of Miss Curigwen Lewis, acting Charlotte Brontë. Miss Lewis (here, as also when playing Bathsheba Everdene in *Far From the Madding Crowd*) hasn't yet ironed out of her voice that sort of Roedean tiresomeness, which can be so irritating from English actresses. Jane Baxter alone seems to know how to put it to good purpose, and I doubt if she would have cared to risk it in Haworth Parsonage. Mr. Rex Tucker's production was just about fair, quite lacking the ice of imagination, which this subject violently needed. Adequacy here—normal, decent B.B.C. adequacy—was inadequate.

Such things cannot be said of the dramatized diary of Hans Andersen's visit to London in 1847, presented by the Third Programme in its series *A Year I Remember*. This was attractively done, and Laidman Browne used his voice well as the famous but naïve Dane. What a bore he must have been! I remember reading somewhere that Dickens found a visit from Andersen oppressive eventually. The hour which this programme lasted did not seem a minute too short. Mr. Douglas Cleverdon (or his script-writers) might, I think, have been more ruthless in sub-editing some of Hans Andersen's raptures over the white stocks and grand toilettes, the gold, satin, lace, and flowers, which welcomed his eye. Not that one wishes to do without such detail, which are the Vermeer-like glints and highlights, most grateful in radio, of such a picture; but there is a danger of over-estimating the pricelessness of original material, unpublished letters, diaries, and so forth, simply because they are original. (Mr. Leslie Baily comes to mind as particularly expert in not confounding finished entertainment with basic material.) Here was a question of compression only.

The great waste spaces of morning and afternoon broadcasting have not yielded much comfort, except for an affectionate interest in *Woman's Hour* which began when, switching on idly just before the end of the hour, I heard a bright voice say: "Well! About tomorrow! There's a talk on rabbits to start off with!" It was the voice of Miss Olive Shapley, who guides the programme. The most enterprising, and surprising, fact about *Woman's Hour* is the amount of geography it covers, from Bangor to Bengal, from Uganda to Oxford, while in spirit never moving far from a Chelsea lunch-parlour. Miss Shapley evidently takes immense trouble varying her speakers, and the skill with which she also varies her "Thank you!" or "Thank you so much!", so that it sounds just right for each subject, whether that be babies or women's cricket, is worth listening for.

I can't end radio notes without one glancing grateful reference to the performance by the Aeolian String Quartet, in the Third Programme last Friday, of the most impressive *String Quartet No. 3, in F., Op. 73*, by Shostakovich.

MARK OGILVIE

THE MOVIES

"Champion," at the Odeon
"That Lady in Ermine," at the London Pavilion

IT might appear bad timing that *The Set-up* a first-rate film about the degeneration of boxing, should be followed immediately by another and obviously inferior treatment of the same topic. In merit, *Champion* must be regarded as a pretty poor second (though by no means despicable). But does merit decide the case? Hollywood knows as a rule what it is doing, however much we may deplore this aptitude. The two films do not, in fact, clash. Superficially they may seem to tackle similar interests, exploit similar surroundings, and point much the same moral; but there the rivalry ends. One is a piece of realist reporting that aims at an intelligent minority; the other goes in a sensational and sentimental way for the biggest audience. *Champion*, in other words, will appeal to the very crowd which showed up so unflatteringly in the earlier film. For those who follow boxing, here is that much-speeded-up slogging that provides the romantic screen version of it. There is not one moment of cautious sparring in *Champion*: none of these fighters ever defends, both sides slam and slam with guard down, and it is patent, even to one as inexpert as myself, that this performance bears no resemblance to boxing whatsoever. Theirs is the sort of non-stop battering schoolboys dream of. *Champion* ends with a perfect tornado of this kind, which I've no doubt would have thrilled me if I did not find boxers more boring to watch on the screen than even race-horses. Excerpts from many of the champion's earlier matches, I'm sorry to say, are inflicted on us in a mighty flash-back that includes also (as you might expect) job-hunting, blondes and costly apartments.

Champion differs from the average boxing film in three things: (1) its hero is a twister with a grudge against humanity; (2) he dies after the great slogging match from haemorrhage of the brain; and (3) the boxing racket is shown to move no less disagreeably than he. In order to make this generally palatable the hero (Kirk Douglas) has been allowed a smile and a good deal of charm; while a crippled brother, a dying mother, a wronged wife, and an honest trainer are sprinkled about to keep the tears near. *Champion* is well made of its kind, and will be, I imagine, a raging success. So far from being shocked by the behaviour of the hero, the audience at the Odeon seemed delighted by his brutality and double-dealing.

Lubitsch's last film (completed apparently by others after his death) has a certain pervasive elegance in Technicolor and some flickers of fantasy to remind us of its source. A Ruritanian palace, investment by the enemy, the hero and heroine duplicated by ancestors who step out of their pictures in the hall, choruses of Hungarian officers, family wraiths, and clocks with a multitude of strikes: it is all, to tell the truth, far too muddled and too comatose to stir more than an occasional grunt of pleasure. Still, one can discern, at a remove and swamped after years of surrender to popular taste, the ghost of a talent.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

Correspondence

THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

SIR,—One can sympathise with Mr. Crossman in tackling so thorny a problem as the relation of State to independent education. The logic of his argument, however, is difficult to follow.

Mr. Crossman quotes the Population Commission: "It may be anticipated that a considerable proportion of parents will seek grammar school education for their children elsewhere *because they cannot qualify for a place in the public system.*" Presumably Mr. Crossman accepts this analysis. What is happening is that middle-class parents, whose children have little academic aptitude but can no longer take up privileged fee-paying places in grammar schools, are reluctant to send them to secondary modern schools which do not attempt to impose a traditional academic education on children for whom it is obviously not suited. The low prestige of these schools is an inevitable reflection of the low prestige of non-professional occupations. To follow public opinion in this matter is hardly a traditional Socialist attitude. What solution can Mr. Crossman offer to this problem?

Admittedly, the selection at 11 plus can be challenged, but only if it is proposed to raise the school-leaving age generally. The comprehensive school seems to offer the best means of mitigating the problems of selection and prestige. For many years, however, it seems inevitable that many middle-class children—in their own best interests educationally—will not secure admittance to state grammar schools. The provision of free places in Public Schools is quite irrelevant, if once the principle is accepted that an academic education is not suitable for the majority of children. The principle inevitably presupposes an hierarchical educational system. Given equality of opportunity, is any other system possible if the distribution of abilities is unequal?

After quoting from the Population Commission report, Mr. Crossman seems to shift his ground and to attribute the popularity of fee-paying schools to the inferiority of State schools: "Alternatively, the Executive deludes itself, in defiance of all evidence, that the State system will soon become so excellent that the demand for fee-paying schools will be removed." Does Mr. Crossman include the State grammar schools with the secondary modern schools in this sweeping dismissal? Logically, the chief crime of the grammar schools seems to lie in their insistence on a standard which is too high for some middle-class children.

It may be admitted that the wealthier Public Schools do offer a superior academic education, though they have made little contribution to the problem of educating the non-academic boy. Surely this is the simple result of smaller classes and a higher paid staff. "Variety of teaching method" (which can be interpreted to mean many things) is directly dependent on the first of these advantages. If all places in recognised Public Schools were made free, this could only benefit 2 per cent. of the school population. To make them schools for the *élite* or the "potential managers of men" would depress the status and prestige of every grammar school in the country. Moreover, such a policy ignores perhaps the most valuable potential contribution of the Public Schools to our educational system, their provision of the boarding school education for those whose home circumstances make it most necessary.

Mr. Crossman's desire to destroy the exclusiveness of the Public Schools is understandable. But to do so at the expense of the State system would be unpardonable. Surely Labour's wisest policy, if unspectacular, must be to raise the quality of State education as a whole. Our grammar schools have by no means a contemptible record, academic or otherwise, while the secondary modern schools are as yet in the first stage of experiment.

I submit that middle-class reluctance to relinquish its old educational privilege, even at the cost of limiting the family, cannot be cured by direct Government action. Only a change of attitude towards the non-professional occupations can provide any fundamental remedy. The Public School problem is a different and less acute question, for numerically the

Public School population is insignificant. To confuse the two questions, and to exaggerate, as Mr. Crossman has done, the superiority of the Public Schools, make his proposals a poor basis for Labour Party policy.

Welwyn Garden City, Herts. J. BULL

SIR,—I read Mr. Crossman's article on education and the middle classes with interest. Your remarks on the growth of the demand for fee-paying grammar school places are quite correct; and can it be wondered at if many local authorities are like that of Buckinghamshire? You say that 11 years is too young for the sifting out of children—in Bucks this process begins as early as 9. The scholarship examination is taken at the ages 9¼ and 10½. Some of the younger children, owing to the accident of birthdays, are up against children of 11½ years and I have it in black and white from the Amersham Divisional Education Officer that no age allowance is given to these children. He says "the younger children have a second chance."

Does anyone consider the position of girls also, in areas such as this where there are so many mixed schools, all of whom, of course, have male heads. The examiners are men and I cannot help wondering if the girls have a completely equal chance in this set-up. Of course numbers for each candidate are used in the first place, but identity must be revealed in the final choice as the grammar school for which the children win places is co-educational.

Out of at least 500 children competing this year, 56 places were awarded—can anyone pretend that represents the number of children capable of benefiting from a grammar school education? 32 of these were boys, 24 girls, which rather bears out my former remark on the position of girls.

Personally I think many parents, who would otherwise pay, would be prepared to use the modern schools if they were able to keep promising children there to take the School Certificate examination or whatever replaces it. At the moment, if a child does not have the grammar type of education, he or she is debarred from so many careers, even teaching, and this frightful bar is placed in Bucks at the early age of 9 or 10. While this continues, parents will pay out their last farthing—at least the conscientious ones will. KATHLEEN SPOONER

SIR,—While agreeing with much of what Mr. Crossman says about the population report and education, I think one thing seems to have escaped notice. The birth rate has been dropping, on one curve or another, in almost all countries, including those, otherwise like our own, where education is virtually classless and the professional parent has little if any expenses on that score—for instance Scandinavia. It has also dropped in Catholic Eire. This seems to show that there are other important reasons which stop people from becoming parents. Perhaps the mere fact that there are so many alternative amusements?

It is odd to see the come-back "humanism" is having. Joad all for the classics, and now Dick Crossman on delightful Greek prose and delicious Latin verse! Have they read any of the Celtic or Indian classics? No! Nor, as a matter of fact, have I. But one could quite certainly learn just as much from them and perhaps be less deluded about the nature of mankind. And if one must learn to write verse in a dead language, what about Anglo-Saxon or Icelandic? Both have the feel of real poetry which Horace lacks. Nor would it do boys any harm to read about a civilisation in which half the population—the women—were less badly treated than in the Mediterranean area. But perhaps this is the viewpoint of a barbarian woman—like Medea: she, if you remember, had her views on classical Athens and also on the population problem. NAOMI MITCHISON

ETON AND THE POLYTECHNIC

SIR,—The inclusion in your *This England* column of the news that the Old Etonians' Association is to hold its annual general meeting at the Regent Street Polytechnic suggests that you find the conjunction both ludicrous and novel. To what depths (you would seem to suggest) have Old Etonians sunk that they should celebrate the gilded glories of their youth in what (one may guess) you are elderly enough still to think of as a "might school." And to what heights, you seem to imply, has the Regent Street Polytechnic been raised in this egalitarian age that across its astonishing Entrance Hall should pass in droves the sons and fathers of the land's *élite*.

Sir, you have foisted a chestnut on your readers. You will find that the funny joke about the Polytechnic is as old as Man and Superman: that the first Old Etonian to enter the Polytechnic was its Founder, Quintin Hogg: and that King's College, Cambridge, so long Eton's close preserve, has numbered among its Fellows in these latter days one who rose to those heights from the same depths to which you regard the Old Etonians as shortly to descend. The connection between Eton and the Polytechnic is therefore no risible reversal of the traditional. It has long been part of the natural order of things. *Floreat Polytechnica!* L. C. B. SEAMAN

DETERMINISM

SIR,—Mr. Shackell and others who have written to me share roughly the view of Laplace: that every event is determined by earlier causes, to which ideally it might be traced without ambiguity. We are uncertain of a future event only because we do not happen to know these causes fully. Laplace's angel, whom he did suppose to know them all, would be able from the present to describe the future (and the past) for ever, with no uncertainty.

Even on theoretical grounds, I doubt whether this view is now tenable. It was so when Laplace wrote, because then there was in theory no limit to the detail in which we might know events, present and future. Since then, however, it has been shown that there is a physical limit to observation. There are stops to our knowing fully either the present or the future of an electron. I doubt therefore whether it makes sense to claim that its future is determined, when it is certain that physical methods can never forecast it. So that it seems to me hard to believe in determinism unless, like Laplace, you also believe in angels.

But there are more practical reasons for rejecting determinism, and they do not stop at the electron. Take a good, home-made lump of metal like, say, plutonium. We know that rather more than half of it will have undergone radioactive decay in 25,000 years. But we do not know which half is which; we cannot say of any grain whether it will fall into the decayed or the surviving half. There are no physical laws to tell us—and there cannot be. This is the striking point: von Neumann and others have shown conclusively that no causal theory whatever could make such forecasts without doing violence to some of the known and certain facts.

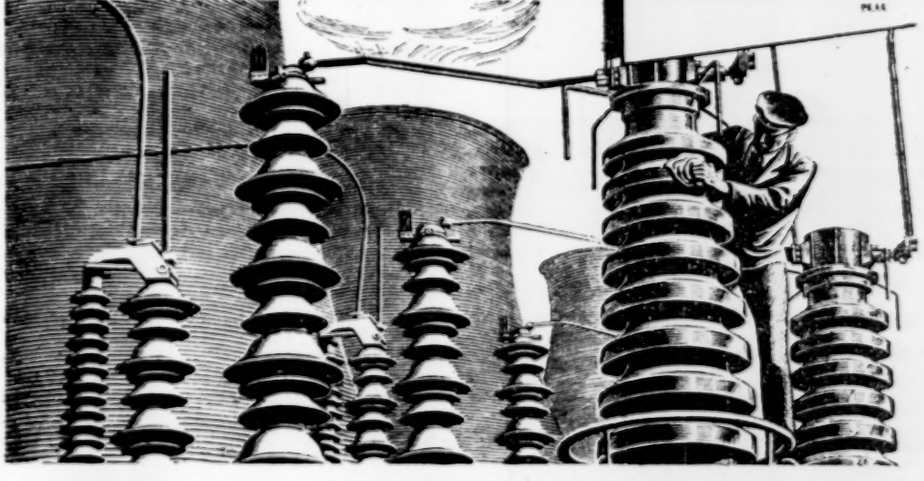
I do not know whether all this has any bearing on the larger problem of the human will. But there is a larger point which I want to make. The method of cause and effect was brought into philosophy and science by Hobbes and Newton. They knew that they were making an important advance, and that it was an advance in method. And the method has been enormously successful. But we have come to assume that any event which did not seem to flow from its antecedents was sure to do so, if we broke it down into smaller and smaller pieces, either of fact or of matter. It is this analytic process which has become the undertone of determinism. And this is where causal theory has broken down, for instance in atomic physics. But cause and effect in the large, as statistical order, seem to me more important and more fruitful than the analytic method. That is why I pointed to the distinction in my review.

Monks Risborough, Bucks. J. BRONOWSKI

THE FRENCH POLICE

SIR,—No doubt Mr. Payne's meditation on being beaten up has shown to the British reader the French policeman under a most unpleasant light. According to him, the French policeman is a monster,

Every power station has its batteries. That will always be so, no matter what future source of energy may generate the main supply. For switchgear operation, emergency lighting, fire-fighting equipment and other auxiliary services, batteries are essential: for only in a battery can electrical power be stored against an emergency. In power stations all over the world batteries made by The Chloride Electrical Storage Company are at work or are being installed. Over 50 years' experience of battery design and manufacture goes into every Chloride, Exide or Exide-Ironclad battery. They are batteries men have learnt to trust.



with a revolver, a truncheon, bad language and a "face set for murder." Also, following Mr. Payne's description, he is as bad as, if not worse than, the Nazis who, having ruled him for five years, have influenced him so much that he behaves like them.

I would like, however, to show you a different policeman, kind and gentle, with language like a prince and no truncheon or revolver. This, however, is impossible, at least as far as I am concerned, because being a French student myself I am afraid he will not come with me: you see the French policeman does not like students. This, because ever since the *bachot* was instituted, it has been a habit, or should I say a tradition for us to come out of the exam room and make what is called a "jolly good row," and it happened that many years ago, long before the Nazis even were dreaming of coming to have a look at Paris, about fifty students got hold of ten French policemen and took their trousers away.

Ever since then, every year, there has been a fight, and the French policemen, remembering the fate of their ancestors, are vengeful and indeed so nasty that they do remind us of the brutal Nazis.

I hope this will assure Mr. Payne that really very little "traces of Nazi domination have been allowed to survive" and our "dear" policeman is not the guilty one.

MYRON SCHUCHALTER

SIR,—The following incident illustrates the brutalising after-effects of Nazi domination which seems to prevail, not only among the French police, but also among the general public.

On the evening of 12th July I saw a man being briskly frog-marched by two gendarmes from the Place St. Michel across the Pont St. Michel, followed by a small crowd mainly composed of students. Halfway across the bridge the gendarmes released him, one walking away. The man accused the remaining gendarme of having broken his arm. The gendarme's reply was a resounding blow in the face—delivered with all the force of which he was capable.

What shocked and sickened me even more than this display of quite unnecessary violence was the reaction of the not inconsiderable crowd which had gathered. They displayed complete indifference, and, in many instances, a vague amusement.

MYRTLE JAQUES

19, Avenue Kléber, Paris 16ème.

DOCTORS AND THE PRESS

SIR,—Autolycus, critic of the Press, is himself at risk under the charge noted in paragraph 553 in the Royal Commission's report: "readiness to make statements on inadequate evidence." It is not true that the B.M.A. Conference at Harrogate "was so grossly distorted by some Right-wing papers that the B.M.A. had to send strong protests to the editors of two of them." This statement seems to be based on a misunderstanding by one out of the twenty-five newspaper correspondents attending the Conference. Even so, I notice, with amusement but without surprise, that "national newspapers" in the correspondent's version becomes "Right-wing papers" in that of Autolycus. In plain dull fact, no "protests" were sent by the B.M.A. to any paper—Right-wing, Left-wing or middle-wing—during or after the Harrogate Conference. A single telephone call to my office would have enabled Autolycus to check his facts. He is not known to have made such a call.

As regards the general Press treatment of the Conference, the Press, including the headline writers, can safely be left to defend themselves. However, as a matter again of dull fact, Autolycus is incorrect in saying "the Conservative papers dropped the conference altogether. Only the *Manchester Guardian*, *The Times* and the *News Chronicle* reported the delegates' rejection, the following day, of the proposal in the B.M.A.'s annual report to refuse service in cases of dental hæmorrhage." This rejection occurred on Saturday, June 25. It was reported with headlines the following day by the *Sunday Times* and *The Observer* and also by the *Sunday Chronicle*. Naturally it was not widely reported on the Monday by which time, as Autolycus knows, Saturday's news is a bit stale for most of the "populars."

B.M.A., Tavistock Square, JOHN PRINGLE
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[Autolycus writes: "Mr. Pringle is quite correct in supposing that the statement that the B.M.A. sent protests to two newspapers was based upon a story by one of the correspondents at the conference. In this column my business is with what is published in the Press; no telephone inquiry was required to corroborate the fact that the *Daily Herald* correspondent reported such a protest. The additional statement that Right-wing papers were concerned was, I admit, the result of information from a second correspondent at the conference. If they were both the victims, as is suggested, of a 'misunderstanding,' then I can only express my regret at giving publicity to their misapprehension.

"In stating that 'the Conservative papers dropped the conference' after the first day, I meant, naturally, those Conservative papers which I had already quoted, i.e., the Conservative dailies. The reports in the Sunday papers were not relevant to my argument."—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

SIR,—In words which may sound familiar in his ears, may I ask your snapper-up of unconsidered trifles:—

"Are you in earnest, sir?
I smell the trick on't."

It may be a moot point as to whether or not one should modify one's interpretation of decisions of the B.M.A. because of the "desirability of good relations between doctors and the nation"—I have noticed that *The New Statesman and Nation* is not always in favour of such a temperate approach—but whatever Autolycus may say about "sensationalism" and "gross distortion," the fact remains that the doctors did threaten to withdraw from the National Health Service. Your protest against the word "strike" is a mere quibble, for, if they did leave the service—and the threat to use "this weapon with which we shall win" is still in being—there is no doubt that they would be taking strike action against the administrative side of the service, although, as the *Manchester Guardian* pointed out (Autolycus ignored the fact) this would not mean the cessation of medical attention. As for the astonishment of the delegates when they opened their morning papers . . . The doctors to whom I spoke at Harrogate found no fault at all with the *Manchester Guardian* beyond suggesting that perhaps the report had been given too prominent a place in the paper.

With what envy some of the Trade Unions must have regarded the unanimous fighting front presented by the doctors at Harrogate? And how many can match among their members the demagogic fury of Mr. Lawrence Abel or the more restrained but equally resolute fire of Dr. Guy Dain who carried all before him: "If we cannot obtain complete freedom to take our case to arbitration we shall be compelled to come out of the service." Strike or walk-out, one was left in no doubts at all as to the temper of the meeting or what was in the minds of the doctors. They may not care for the word strike—to a professional body it may savour too much of Trade Unionism—but they gave a very fair imitation of men who were resolved on action; who were no less vociferously determined than a gathering of dockers, railwaymen or miners when they feel that words alone will not redress their grievances.

May I borrow again from your correspondent's namesake and ask Autolycus:

"Beseech you, sir, were you present at this relation?"

W. E. COCKBURN

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FREUD'S THREE ESSAYS

SIR,—In reviewing a new translation of Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Mr. Geoffrey Gorer remarks that "this short study" is "not one of Freud's most important or original works." This is, I think, a totally mistaken judgment.

Before the *Three Essays* were published in 1905, it was believed that, except in a very small number of highly pathological cases, the sexual impulse in human beings was entirely concerned with the reproductive functions and organs and consequently had no existence before the age of puberty. Freud set out to show in his *Three Essays* (*a*) that the sexual impulse is of a complex nature, and comprises derivatives from functions and organs quite other than those concerned with reproduction; (*b*) that the sexual impulse in all men and women (including those described as "normal") contains, consciously or unconsciously, elements of what had previously been regarded as "perversions"; and (*c*) that the sexual impulse is, in one form or another, present from birth and that its manifestations can be observed in even the youngest children. The importance of these conclusions could hardly be disputed; their extreme originality, painfully evident forty years ago, is now forgotten, simply because they are universally accepted to-day as a matter of course.

Of all Freud's writings, in fact, the *Three Essays*—so lightly regarded by Mr. Gorer—are second in importance and originality only to his *Interpretation of Dreams*. In their practical repercussions—in the revolution they have produced, to take only one instance, in people's attitude towards children—the *Three Essays* have perhaps been the most important of all.

JAMES STRACHEY

41 Gordon Square, W.C.1.

DOCTORS AND SPONGERS

SIR,—In the discussion going on in your columns about the National Health Service, your readers may be interested to know the views of a pharmacist doing a good deal of dispensing.

It seems that the Government were anxious to get the Act working at all costs, and let it go to the country without any instructions to prevent wastage of public money. Much expense would have been saved if they had studied New Zealand and Australian experience.

There, it appears, patent medicines and proprietaries are not to be prescribed by the doctors; this, in itself, saves much expenditure. The high cost of prescriptions dispensed here is due, chiefly, to the fact that doctors order indiscriminately proprietaries at high cost; it is done to placate the patient, also due to the propaganda among the doctors carried on by the manufacturers.

As is well known, commercialism has invaded science and great chemical works discovering products of therapeutic action immediately set about creating a market for them.

They are called "ethical" proprietaries, but in reality are only a form of genteel quackery. There are those research chemists and pharmacologists trying to discover what action their new products have on human organism, there are hospitals and clinics at their service for experimental data. As soon as the action is determined the boom starts; publicity and literature impress a certain type of doctor, who prides himself on being up to date. We get numerous prescriptions for this latest medical marvel and, sure enough, after an interval, the remedy is relegated to our cupboards with other dead stock.

The older remedies, established by age-long experience, are more adapted to the human organism than these drastic modern discoveries, which often prove destructive to other functions of the human body.

The doctors are not entirely to blame; formularies are being published with prescriptions for common ailments, so as to save writing out all the ingredients. If these recipes were good, they would gradually replace the proprietaries, but what happens is that they are so inefficient and so badly composed, that they are being revised in each edition of the formulary.

The Pharmaceutical Society created a serious shortage of qualified dispensers, by carrying out an insane policy of putting obstacles in the way of new candidates, by making the entry into pharmacy more difficult, and extending unnecessarily the course of study. The cost of dispensing has risen considerably owing to a great increase in the cost of labour; when the Government begins to economise, it will go elsewhere to find dispensers—to the detriment of the Service.

PH. C.

DIPLOMATIC PRIVILEGES

SIR,—In *Letters from Two Islands* (your columns, July 16th) Mr. J. B. Priestley writes of "those immense diplomatic privileges that free our Ministers and their senior officials from all the restrictions that they invent for the rest of us."

I wish Mr. Priestley would say what these privileges are. I seem to have been missing something.

SENIOR OFFICIAL

BOOKS IN GENERAL

IN the Russian novel of the 19th century we are hypnotised by the great peaks, the riotous and the serene, the prophetic and the sickly crests. We do not notice the foothills from which they rise. We suppose anything below the snowline to be choked by the vegetation of provinciality, regionalism, folklore, and the merely typical. The work of a writer like Leskov, for example, seems to come into this category or surely more would have been heard of him before. But Leskov's short stories, which have a native reek as strong as Gorki's, and are difficult to translate, are becoming better known in England; he is a considerable figure. Edward Garnett introduced him first in a collection of stories called *The Sentry* in 1922; this volume contained the unforgettable *The Lady Macbeth of the Mzinsk District* and ought to be reprinted. A few years ago appeared another collection called *The Musk Ox* translated by L. Norman; and now Mr. David Magarshack has translated **The Amazon* which includes a long comic tale far more interesting than the titlepiece called *The March Hare*. This meaty and farcical social satire in which the old "broad" Russia feigns innocence and splits its sides and rocks with huge, secret mischief, was not published in Russia until 1917, twenty-two years after Leskov's death.

Russian criticism has traditionally been poisoned by faction and politics. The Left hated Leskov because he attacked the Nihilists; the Right disliked his ribaldry at the expense of the Church. For the public, he has always been (we are told), one of the most loved of Russian writers. One can see the difficulty of the critics: he lies athwart the parties, he lies half in literature and half in life, and he has little of that sickness which, in one way or another, shadows the eyes of every other Russian writer. Russian criticism is full of adjurations to faith in humanity. Leskov had that faith by nature. The child of poor people, brought up without education—it is said that to the end of his life, the malicious question "Aren't you a graduate of the University of Kiev?" could be trusted to fill him with rage—he grew up, unlike other writers, outside cultivated society, went into business for an English firm and for many years travelled all over Russia. Because he was of them, he mixed with the people, to an extent unknown among his contemporaries—he did not have self-consciously to "go" to the people as many of the Intelligentsia did—and he is soaked in their tales, their speech, and their habits of mind. He never became "literary" as Gorki eventually did. He is a kind of Dostoevski without the epileptic fits. If in the others there is the clean cutting edge of mania or mission, in Leskov there is a weed-like diffusion of the impressionist, the non-stop sketchiness of personal kindness, sanity and experience. He is "in life."

Perhaps too much. The advantage of a literary education is that it imparts a sense of proportion and of form. Leskov has little. In *The March Hare*, where a lunatic is supposed to be telling the story, the author says "I hope no one will find fault with me if his words and my words get a little mixed up . . . I'm afraid it can't be helped." Leskov often seems uncomfortably mixed up between two very different truths: the truth of life and the truth of art. And although the talking ease, naturalness, the artlessness, the lack of intellectual embarrassment of Russian writing—its great contribution to story telling—carries him through, we do sometimes feel there is an awkwardness of digestion, an old-fashioned touch of *Blackwoods*.

For a long time *The Amazon*, which is the story of how a wordy old scolding procuress induces an officer's discarded wife to become a prostitute, reads thinly like a number of unconvincing documentary interviews with an old "character." We seem to hear the plummy voice of the journalist. It is really the voice of the traveller. His stories ramble with the effusive dust of the journey on them. Their untidiness must not be seen as literary incompetence but as a means of establishing the Russia outside the story, the warm judgment of endless picaresque history, in which human character and feeling can take on the stains of usage. One can see how much more neatly Maupassant would have handled the girl's relationship with the procuress in *The Amazon*; one can hear Tolstoy's sermon, Dostoevski's spiritual melodrama, Chehov's sad, grey words. Leskov is more moved to disentangle, at length, what a woman of the people is really like, how she is neither good nor bad, but a simple person whose mind is made of plain pieces that do not quite fit. Being a self-taught man himself, Leskov pounces upon ignorance with affection. Other writers denounce or mock it, but he treats it sympathetically as the furniture which encumbers the minds of ordinary people. The "falling" girl is a masterpiece of feminine portraiture. Leskov draws women of many kinds with truthfulness and originality. One is left with a double feeling after this story: first of admiration for the finest work in it; secondly, a kind of awed deference to human life which can produce such "inartistic" material. One feels one has seen a little art and a lot of life.

Leskov had a religious upbringing and he found the grotesque and the comic in his religion: his attitude is close to the heroic and irreverent feeling of the folk whose virtue and wickedness are enlarged by faith; who are, prosaically married to their God for better or for worse. Religion is for Leskov what crime is for Dostoevski: a complete world, sometimes farcical, or pitiable, sublime or disgusting; but, a strange and awkward furniture. Nothing pleased Leskov more than to draw a bishop—as in *The March Hare*—as a gluttonous old humbug of narrow mind but natural wisdom; sly, corrupt, yet, in sudden glimpses, sensitive, enlightened and generous. (I should say there are also intelligent bishops in Leskov; he has a dramatic sense of religion as a quest or journey, a discovery of what faith is not, that the goal is not here in this place, and that, once more, the deceived traveller must set out.) He had the heart of the comic genius in him, for he knew how to revere the absurd and the ignorant, before he exposed them. His favourite saints are recalcitrant. In *The March Hare*, he gets an old lunatic police officer to tell his life story. The old man comes from a village in a backward province, in which all the evils of a tough medieval life are cheerfully flourishing. As a boy—it is no doubt a fantastic version of Leskov's old childhood—he was turned into a choir boy by the bishop who taught him to weep over Ovid; and was educated by the cynical choir master who taught by "the abridged method" or "cut it all short!" He provided the boy with a book called *Rules for the Revelation of Truth* when he left his classes to become the police officer in his village, a place-riddled with horse thieves. The book imparts to a lusty, innocent youth the primitive principles of law: how to put the fear of God into accused and witnesses.

The system is a success. Rule by vehemence and superstition is a pleasure to everyone: what people like is to know where they are, so that they can sit back to the infinitely consoling business of man on earth: how to get the better of their neighbours. But presently the Governor says this is all backward. Progress arrives. The real crimes are political. They occur in the mind. They are, in short, dangerous thought. Dangerous thought is not merely what people think, but what they are likely to think next. The poor, innocently reactionary, swindling policeman with his naive justice, slowly goes mad as he tries vainly to turn himself into an agent of the secret police, looking for socialists in "Greek hats" and their women "like frogs in dark glasses." He is Shakespeare's Bottom with the ass head of politics on his shoulders. The body farce, the walloping, the cynicism, the poetry of Russian humour is in this story which is also tender and moving and has a tight-coiled spring of indignation in it. Leskov's colloquial dialogue is a difficulty for the translator; I found traces of the stage charwoman in the first story, but in *The March Hare* Mr. Magarshack has hit upon an acceptable idiom.

* * *

Two more Russian translations appear in The Novel Library, charming examples of book production, in fact the pleasantest pocket classics that I know. (Why the cheap classics should be turned out with the dinginess of prayer books, I cannot imagine, unless it is thought puritanically proper that a good book should look plain and Quakerish.) *The Cossacks*† is one of Tolstoy's earliest tales. It contains sentences that the older Tolstoy would not have written; for example, the description of the sunrise in the Caucasus where he says "the angel of sunrise had taken her flight." But the mature Tolstoy is exactly foretold in this limpid tale of a young man who leaves smart society for what seems to him the cleanliness of primitive life. Even at the end when he wrote *Resurrection*, Tolstoy had not lost his wonderful gift of evoking the seriousness, the sadness, the happiness, the unspoiled animal curiosity of youth, where the conscience itself is fresh, the power of spiritual recuperation immediate and the apple of life is crisp. The journey to the Caucasus, the arrival at the frontier post, the shooting of the tribesman on the first night, the young officer's frightened, respectful and romantic love of the Cossack girl, are the events of a spiritual journey; yet the meaning of the journey is no more than the astonishing fact that the young man is a year older at the end. This story lies in the trance of animal innocence, the cold-eyed innocence of nature; so that when the Cossack sits on the river bank by the dead body of the tribesman he has shot and the sun comes up, we feel the astonishment of young eyes looking at the world for the first time, the young emotion that time and space are infinite. Even later on in Tolstoy's writing, and in all his characters, one never loses this sense that for them the world has begun again every morning. He will never lose the power to convey the sense of simple captivation by life. The other Russian translation is Gogol's *Dead Souls*‡. This new version was very much needed and Mr. Reavey has done his work excellently, catching the casual conversational malice, the air of lightly carried persecution mania, on which this great, broken, comic masterpiece so swiftly floats.

V. S. PRITCHETT

* *The Amazon*. By Nikolai S. Leskov. Translated by David Magarshack. *Allen & Unwin*. 10s. 6d.
† *The Cossacks*. By Leo Tolstoy. Translated by Vera Traill. *Hamish Hamilton*. 6s.
‡ *Dead Souls*. By Nikolai Gogol. Translated by George Reavey. *Hamish Hamilton*. 6s.

with a revolver, a truncheon, bad language and a "face set for murder." Also, following Mr. Payne's description, he is as bad as, if not worse than, the Nazis who, having ruled him for five years, have influenced him so much that he behaves like them.

I would like, however, to show you a different policeman, kind and gentle, with language like a prince and no truncheon or revolver. This, however, is impossible, at least as far as I am concerned, because being a French student myself I am afraid he will not come with me: you see the French policeman does not like students. This, because ever since the *bachot* was instituted, it has been a habit, or should I say a tradition for us to come out of the exam room and make what is called a "jolly good row," and it happened that many years ago, long before the Nazis even were dreaming of coming to have a look at Paris, about fifty students got hold of ten French policemen and took their trousers away.

Ever since then, every year, there has been a fight, and the French policemen, remembering the fate of their ancestors, are vengeful and indeed so nasty that they do remind us of the brutal Nazis.

I hope this will assure Mr. Payne that really very little "traces of Nazi domination have been allowed to survive" and our "dear" policeman is not the guilty one. MYRON SCHUCHALTER

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

IN the Russian novel of the 19th century we are hypnotised by the great peaks, the riotous and the serene, the prophetic and the sickly crests. We do not notice the foothills from which they rise. We suppose anything below the snowline to be choked by the vegetation of provinciality, regionalism, folklore, and the merely typical. The work of a writer like Leskov, for example, seems to come into this category or surely more would have been heard of him before. But Leskov's short stories, which have a native reek as strong as Gorki's, and are difficult to translate, are becoming better known in England; he is a considerable figure. Edward Garnett introduced him first in a collection of stories called *The Sentry* in 1922; this volume contained the unforgettable *The Lady Macbeth of the Mzinsk District* and ought to be reprinted. A few years ago appeared another collection called *The Musk Ox* translated by L. Norman; and now Mr. David Magarshack has translated **The Amazon* which includes a long comic tale far more interesting than the titlepiece called *The March Hare*. This meaty and farcical social satire in which the old "broad" Russia feigns innocence and splits its sides and rocks with huge, secret mischief, was not published in Russia until 1917, twenty-two years after Leskov's death.

Russian criticism has traditionally been poisoned by faction and politics. The Left hated Leskov because he attacked the Nihilists; the Right disliked his ribaldry at the expense of the Church. For the public, he has always been (we are told), one of the most loved of Russian writers. One can see the difficulty of the critics: he lies athwart the parties, he lies half in literature and half in life, and he has little of that sickness which, in one way or another, shadows the eyes of every other Russian writer. Russian criticism is full of adjurations to faith in humanity. Leskov had that faith by nature. The child of poor people, brought up without education—it is said that to the end of his life, the malicious question "Aren't you a graduate of the University of Kiev?" could be trusted to fill him with rage—he grew up, unlike other writers, outside cultivated society, went into business for an English firm and for many years travelled all over Russia. Because he was of them, he mixed with the people, to an extent unknown among his contemporaries—he did not have self-consciously to "go" to the people as many of the Intelligentsia did—and he is soaked in their tales, their speech, and their habits of mind. He never became "literary" as Gorki eventually did. He is a kind of Dostoevski without the epileptic fits. If in the others there is the clean cutting edge of mania or mission, in Leskov there is a weed-like diffusion of the impressionist, the non-stop sketchiness of personal kindness, sanity and experience. He is "in life."

Perhaps too much. The advantage of a literary education is that it imparts a sense of proportion and of form. Leskov has little. In *The March Hare*, where a lunatic is supposed to be telling the story, the author says "I hope no one will find fault with me if his words and my words get a little mixed up . . . I'm afraid it can't be helped." Leskov often seems uncomfortably mixed up between two very different truths: the truth of life and the truth of art. And although the talking ease, naturalness, the artlessness, the lack of intellectual embarrassment of Russian writing—its great contribution to story telling—carries him through, we do sometimes feel there is an awkwardness of digestion, an old-fashioned touch of *Blackwoods*.

For a long time *The Amazon*, which is the story of how a wordy old scolding procuress induces an officer's discarded wife to become a prostitute, reads thinly like a number of unconvincing documentary interviews with an old "character." We seem to hear the plummy voice of the journalist. It is really the voice of the traveller. His stories ramble with the effusive dust of the journey on them. Their untidiness must not be seen as literary incompetence but as a means of establishing the Russia outside the story, the warm judgment of endless picaresque history, in which human character and feeling can take on the stains of usage. One can see how much more neatly Maupassant would have handled the girl's relationship with the procuress in *The Amazon*; one can hear Tolstoy's sermon, Dostoevski's spiritual melodrama, Chehov's sad, grey words. Leskov is more moved to disentangle, at length, what a woman of the people is really like, how she is neither good nor bad, but a simple person whose mind is made of plain pieces that do not quite fit. Being a self-taught man himself, Leskov pounces upon ignorance with affection. Other writers denounce or mock it, but he treats it sympathetically as the furniture which encumbers the minds of ordinary people. The "falling" girl is a masterpiece of feminine portraiture. Leskov draws women of many kinds with truthfulness and originality. One is left with a double feeling after this story: first of admiration for the finest work in it; secondly, a kind of awed deference to human life which can produce such "inartistic" material. One feels one has seen a little art and a lot of life.

Leskov had a religious upbringing and he found the grotesque and the comic in his religion: his attitude is close to the heroic and irreverent feeling of the folk whose virtue and wickedness are enlarged by faith; who are, prosaically married to their God for better or for worse. Religion is for Leskov what crime is for Dostoevski: a complete world, sometimes farcical, or pitiable, sublime or disgusting; but, a strange and awkward furniture. Nothing pleased Leskov more than to draw a bishop—as in *The March Hare*—as a gluttonous old humbug of narrow mind but natural wisdom; sly, corrupt, yet, in sudden glimpses, sensitive, enlightened and generous. (I should say there are also intelligent bishops in Leskov; he has a dramatic sense of religion as a quest or journey, a discovery of what faith is not, that the goal is not here in this place, and that, once more, the deceived traveller must set out.) He had the heart of the comic genius in him, for he knew how to revere the absurd and the ignorant, before he exposed them. His favourite saints are recalcitrant. In *The March Hare*, he gets an old lunatic police officer to tell his life story. The old man comes from a village in a backward province, in which all the evils of a tough medieval life are cheerfully flourishing. As a boy—it is no doubt a fantastic version of Leskov's old childhood—he was turned into a choir boy by the bishop who taught him to weep over Ovid; and was educated by the cynical choir master who taught by "the abridged method" or "cut it all short!" He provided the boy with a book called *Rules for the Revelation of Truth* when he left his classes to become the police officer in his village, a place riddled with horse thieves. The book imparts to a lusty, innocent youth the primitive principles of law: how to put the fear of God into accused and witnesses.

The system is a success. Rule by vehemence and superstition is a pleasure to everyone: what people like is to know where they are, so that they can sit back to the infinitely consoling business of man on earth: how to get the better of their neighbours. But presently the Governor says this is all backward. Progress arrives. The real crimes are political. They occur in the mind. They are, in short, dangerous thought. Dangerous thought is not merely what people think, but what they are likely to think next. The poor, innocently reactionary, swindling policeman with his naive justice, slowly goes mad as he tries vainly to turn himself into an agent of the secret police, looking for socialists in "Greek hats" and their women "like frogs in dark glasses." He is Shakespeare's Bottom with the ass head of politics on his shoulders. The body farce, the walloping, the cynicism, the poetry of Russian humour is in this story which is also tender and moving and has a tight-coiled spring of indignation in it. Leskov's colloquial dialogue is a difficulty for the translator; I found traces of the stage charwoman in the first story, but in *The March Hare* Mr. Magarshack has hit upon an acceptable idiom.

* * *

Two more Russian translations appear in The Novel Library, charming examples of book production, in fact the pleasantest pocket classics that I know. (Why the cheap classics should be turned out with the dinginess of prayer books, I cannot imagine, unless it is thought puritanically proper that a good book should look plain and Quakerish.) *The Cossacks*† is one of Tolstoy's earliest tales. It contains sentences that the older Tolstoy would not have written; for example, the description of the sunrise in the Caucasus where he says "the angel of sunrise had taken her flight." But the mature Tolstoy is exactly foretold in this limpid tale of a young man who leaves smart society for what seems to him the cleanliness of primitive life. Even at the end when he wrote *Resurrection*, Tolstoy had not lost his wonderful gift of evoking the seriousness, the sadness, the happiness, the unspoiled animal curiosity of youth, where the conscience itself is fresh, the power of spiritual recuperation immediate and the apple of life is crisp. The journey to the Caucasus, the arrival at the frontier post, the shooting of the tribesman on the first night, the young officer's frightened, respectful and romantic love of the Cossack girl, are the events of a spiritual journey; yet the meaning of the journey is no more than the astonishing fact that the young man is a year older at the end. This story lies in the trance of animal innocence, the cold-eyed innocence of nature; so that when the Cossack sits on the river bank by the dead body of the tribesman he has shot and the sun comes up, we feel the astonishment of young eyes looking at the world for the first time, the young emotion that time and space are infinite. Even later on in Tolstoy's writing, and in all his characters, one never loses this sense that for them the world has begun again every morning. He will never lose the power to convey the sense of simple captivation by life. The other Russian translation is Gogol's *Dead Souls*‡. This new version was very much needed and Mr. Reavey has done his work excellently, catching the casual conversational malice, the air of lightly carried persecution mania, on which this great, broken, comic masterpiece so swiftly floats.

V. S. PRITCHETT

* *The Amazon*. By Nikolai S. Leskov. Translated by David Magarshack. *Allen & Unwin*. 10s. 6d.
† *The Cossacks*. By Leo Tolstoy. Translated by Vera Traill. *Hamish Hamilton*. 6s.
‡ *Dead Souls*. By Nikolai Gogol. Translated by George Reavey. *Hamish Hamilton*. 6s.

THE ATOM, THE STATE AND BERTRAND RUSSELL

The Atomic Age. By M. L. OLIPHANT, P. M. S. BLACKETT, R. F. HARROD, BERTRAND RUSSELL, LIONEL CURTIS and D. W. BROGAN. *Allen & Unwin.* 7s. 6d.

Authority and the Individual. By BERTRAND RUSSELL. *Allen & Unwin.* 7s. 6d.

The six lectures printed in *The Atomic Age* were delivered in 1948 under the auspices of the Halley Stewart Trust founded in 1924 "to assist in the discovery of the best means by which 'the Mind of Christ' may be applied to extending the Kingdom of God by the prevention and removal of human misery." It cannot be said that their relevance to the application of "the Mind of Christ" is immediately apparent unless, indeed, as Bertrand Russell hints, it may be "the Mind of Christ" that mankind has now proved itself unworthy to exist. For the main theme of the lectures is the effect of the discovery of the release of atomic energy upon power politics.

In some ways the most remarkable lecture of the six is that of Professor Oliphant, remarkable in that he really succeeds in conveying to the layman some account of the developments in physics which resulted in the discovery of atomic fission, some inkling of how it is effected and what it entails. This brilliant essay in clarification provokes the reflection, how can a mind which has been trained to understand the prodigious intricacies of atomic structure be expected to adjust itself to the exigencies and compromises of politics—how, to adapt Plato's phrase, can scientists ever be kings?—a reflection which is reinforced by the naive optimism of Professor Oliphant's conclusion that "thinking man will surely put aside this foolishness"—the "foolishness" of war—"and by positive co-operation for good ensure that the scientific achievement of atomic energy is a decisive step towards the better life for all"?

Professor Blackett tends to play down the effects of atomic power, arguing on the analogy of the exaggerated claims that history records for each new development of offensive warfare from the first cannon to the last bombing aeroplane that atomic power, too, may prove less destructive than men now fear. If it is to prove effective in a war against Russia, it would in any event be required to be supplemented by the invasion of land forces. The argument from analogy is far from convincing; mankind may have "cried wolf" once too often.

Professor Brogan considers the qualifications of Americans for the exercise of world power. Putting a generous interpretation on the motives which lie behind the provision of Marshall Aid—it is, he thinks, designed not as a stroke of good business nor as an instrument for the enslavement of the West through economic dependence, but to stop Communism and bring peace to the world—he nevertheless raises a doubt whether the Americans possess the political ability to discharge the office of watch-dog to Western civilisation, an office which has not so much been deliberately chosen as thrust upon its unreflecting holders.

At once curious and instructive is the metamorphosis of the reputation of Bertrand Russell. The English, says Shaw, speaking of Samuel Butler, "do not deserve to have great men." If the Life Force produces an "original" who embodies a new vision of beauty in paint or stone or sound, he is starved to death in a garret in the usual way. But let "originality" be displayed in the sphere of morals, politics or religion and the "original" is denounced as a perverted immoralist and revolutionary whose doctrines, if embraced, will bring the community to ruin and destruction, and persecuted with all the rigour of the law. Posthumously, however, he will be ennobled and regarded as a pillar of the English tradition and a pattern of the English genius. Russell in his Reith lectures makes the same point. After remarking that all advances in morals and manners, such as the abandonment of cannibalism, human sacrifice and head-hunting, have been due to the moral protests of revolutionary individuals, he concludes that "if a man seriously desires to live the best life that is open to him he must learn to be critical of the tribal customs and tribal beliefs that are generally accepted among his neighbours."

Our age has speeded up the process of rehabilitation so that to-day the honours of great men no longer have to await their death. Shaw, who was laughed at as a mountebank and denounced as a traducer of all that was good, beautiful and true, has lived to be acclaimed the greatest dramatist since Shakespeare and canonised as an intellectual saint. A similar fate is in process of overtaking Bertrand Russell. Author of the "horrid atheism" of *A Free Man's Worship* and a conscientious objector in the first World War, he was publicly denounced, deprived of his Fellowship, sent to prison and anathematized by all respectable men. Then there was that school of his—no punishments, no examinations, no discipline and horrid sexual precocity. "What weren't those poor children being taught? Free love and Communism, certainly, and perhaps worse still!" I can remember the storm of abuse which, as recently as the late Twenties, was provoked by the publication of *Marriage and Morals*.

But to-day Russell is going the way of Shaw and is being apotheosised into an established intellectual institution, guaranteed to say the right thing on important issues, the darling of the B.B.C., the recipient of the O.M., the glory of the nation.

It would, of course, be idle to deny that as he has become more accepted, Russell's views have become more acceptable. Thus, he now entertains "high hopes" for the future of mankind and finds hitherto unsuspected virtues in war.

But on the whole the apotheosis has occurred without any marked softening in the rigour of his thought. The Reith lectures are a sustained plea for the preservation of the freedom and spontaneity of individual life—"progress" Russell urges, "requires the utmost scope for personal initiative that is compatible with social order"—both as against the encroaching power of the centralised state and as against the practical man's view of life which subordinates ends to means. The change of values which Russell advocates may be summed up in his own words: "We ask no longer: what have the producers produced, and what has consumption enabled the consumers in their turn to produce? We ask instead: what has there been in the lives of consumers and producers to make them glad to be alive?"

The lectures are studded with remarks which add to Russell's style the distinction of a wit which results not from the appositeness of verbal collocations, but from the drive of his thought seeking its most appropriate logical expression. Take, for example, the remark with which he clinches his demonstration of the greater closeness of the connection between individual limbs and their owner's body as compared with that which holds between citizens and the State, "but when a farmer in Herefordshire is caught in a blizzard, it is not the government in London that feels cold." He ends the Reith lectures surprisingly—is this, one wonders, mere mellowness or the first intimations of a desire to please?—on a note of hope. "I propose," he says, "to hold out certain high hopes for the not too distant future of mankind which I, for my part, believe to be justified on a sober estimate of possibilities." In the light of the conclusion of the Reith lectures, which is that our predicament arises from the fact that "we have learnt to understand and control to a terrifying extent the forces of nature outside us but not those that are embodied in ourselves," it is difficult to see why. Russell's Halley Stewart lecture does not lessen the difficulty. The discovery of atomic power and the added frightfulness with which it invests war will make war, he thinks, not less likely but more. War, when it comes, may mean the end not merely of civilisation but of the human race owing to the agency of drifting radio-active clouds which may leave our planet destitute of all life. War is reasonably certain unless we can achieve a world government, but this cannot come from agreement among democratic states but only by American domination. Why it should be supposed that American domination could be achieved without a war with Russia in which the worst of the contemplated effects of war might well occur, is not clear. Nor, then, are the grounds for Russell's optimism.

C. E. M. JOAD

TWO COMPOSERS

Sergei Rachmaninoff. By JOHN CULSHAW. *Dobson.* 8s. 6d.

César Franck. By NORMAN DEMUTH. *Dobson.* 12s. 6d.

Of all the composers whose music, or some of it, is constantly performed to-day, Rachmaninoff is probably the most widely misconceived. Press critics, exasperated by the public's "fair is foul and foul is fair" addiction to the Second Piano Concerto, have got into the habit of dismissing the composer as an out-of-date sentimentalist. Musicologists are mostly too busy exploring the Venetian purlieus of the late seventeenth century, or grubbing up fragments of Flemish or Bavarian pewter, to devote attention to the survivors of nineteenth-century Romanticism. In other words, Rachmaninoff—and Franck too, for that matter—are deeply unfashionable, yet too popular to evoke the chivalry of the specialist.

Mr. Culshaw's is, I think, the first successful attempt to examine the nature of Rachmaninoff's genius and to assess the value of his work as a whole. Of the man himself he has understandably found it hard to say very much. Rachmaninoff shared with Brahms and Debussy the useful faculty of impenetrability. It is to be inferred that his view of human relationships followed the lines of "least said, soonest mended." Strongly emotional characters tend to stoicism, in the long run; in life this leads to secrecy, in art to visions of absolute love and beauty, shot with outbursts of anger (as in the last works of Beethoven and Bartok), sometimes of a more controlled bitterness. The beauty of Rachmaninoff's music is obvious—too obvious for some tastes. As Virginia Woolf said of Joseph Conrad: "One opens his pages and feels as Helen must have felt when she looked in her glass and realised that, do what she could, she could never in any circumstances pass for a plain woman." Like Conrad, Rachmaninoff was an idealist, a Slav, and an expatriate; at the bottom of both their hearts was the aristocratic world of the Russian or Polish country house, as Turgenev has described it. Their work is full of images of violence and adventure, but beneath it all is the same nostalgia—the ideal of the gentleman, with his love of perfection and his quiet resignation to the vulgarities of history. And since any such yearning must express itself in art as a brimming-over of beauty, Rachmaninoff's most personal works have this quality of saturation. Many of the songs, the wonderful *Preludes* in B minor and G sharp minor, the *Etude-Tableau* in C major, the slow movements of the first three concertos, the famous D flat variation of the *Paganini Rhapsody*: these are images of love, strong though far from simple. Mr. Culshaw places them with an admirable lucidity: to regard them as other than high-lights would be a failure of understanding improbable in a critic capable of so much insight into his subject:

> It takes a clever musician to write works like the Fourth Concerto and the Third Symphony, but it needs a calm spirit and a deeply poetic nature to create a perfect miniature, a perfect song. Whatever went from Rachmaninoff's life when he left Russia went also from his music; the edifice of a Symphony and Concerto, the brilliance of a piano variation could still be conceived, but the intangible spirit of poetry—the essence, the intimacy of a song—had gone for ever.

That is profoundly true, though slightly overstated. If Rachmaninoff was fundamentally a miniaturist, the larger forms enabled him to express the whole of his nature—the bitterness and resignation, as well as the beauty. Seen in this

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COLLINS

light the Third Symphony becomes the composer's most revealing, because most personal, work. Mr. Culshaw does not care much for it, nor yet for its predecessor; preferring *The Isle of the Dead* and *The Bells.* No doubt the latter is Rachmaninoff's finest effort, as it is his largest; but to the amateur of "subjective" poetry there remains a peculiar fascination in the formal irregularities of the Third Symphony, with its sinister episodes always threatening the autumnal beauty of the material, its alternations of languor and vitality, and its luminous orchestration. It is this enigmatic, despairing work, and the later *Etudes-Tableaux,* which give point to Mr. Culshaw's argument that Rachmaninoff's musical personality was individual rather than original. His powers of invention lay in the melodic rather than the harmonic field—in the long melodies of his slow movements, those unwinding garlands which always seems to have one link more than one expected.

"Music narrow in breadth but deep in spirit": Mr. Culshaw's excellent study leads—and rightly, I think—to the paradoxical conclusion that Rachmaninoff, despite his popularity, is an esoteric composer. His finest utterances, like those of Chopin, are essentially musician's music.

As a pianist he was, of course, among the very great. Mr. Culshaw writes perceptively of his playing; but I cannot see the force of his assertion that Rachmaninoff was a more "powerful" pianist than Busoni. Indeed I should have thought this impossible, for in sheer athletic strength, as well as intellectual power, Busoni had surely no rival. Rachmaninoff's genius as a performer was no more intellectual than his music: its appeal resided in depth and individuality of feeling, expressed through a coruscating dexterity which made one gasp with delighted astonishment. In his last years his exquisite touch became (I am told) more steely: gramophone records bear witness to this change, though they show no diminution of the palestric brilliance which reconciles us to some of his more eccentric interpretations—Schumann's *Carnaval,* for instance, and Beethoven's *C minor Variations.*

Three minor errors seem worth mentioning. Mr. Culshaw refers to a concert at which Scriabin played "one of his own concertos, while Rachmaninoff conducted." The statement is slightly ambiguous, but if "his own" refers to Scriabin it is a mistake, for Scriabin wrote only one Concerto. On page 17, "1823" is clearly a misprint for "1883"; and in the musical quotation at the top of page 122, the first three groups of minims in the alto part should be moved up a major third. The book concludes, usefully, with a detailed list of Rachmaninoff's works, and a discography.

Mr. Demuth's *César Franck* also contains a *catalogue raisonné,* for which we may be grateful; but here our gratitude ends. A full and balanced reassessment of Franck's music is a felt need, but readers who hope to find one in the indefatigable Mr. Demuth's latest offering will be disappointed. I should not care to assume that he has nothing of interest to say about Franck: what I do assert is that he writes in a manner singularly ill adapted to judicious, or even unequivocal, statement. Wherever one opens his book one is baffled and stunned by some wild generalisation or misuse of language. Of the words and music of *Les Béatitudes*: "Neither is very great, but neither *is intended to be so . . .*" "When a Frenchman is down, he is very much down, but when up, usually terrific. A Frenchman does not fear sentiment." "It took the sobering influence of a Walloon to pull French music together from the effervescence in which it was bubbling." "While Liszt may be said to have *immortalised the diminished seventh . . .*" "Franck's harmonic sense was limited, but his chromaticism is always *in the context . . .*" "Intended as a prelude and fugue *in a rather elaborate style of Bach,* the chorale was an afterthought, *as it were.*" ". . . he never allowed himself to be *swamped by the Wagnerian incubus*" (italics mine throughout).

Mr. Demuth's notion of summarising musical history is, if possible, even more slapdash. This is how he describes the state of music at the birth of Franck, in 1822:

> How many of these composers have survived to any large degree other than as historical figures? Auber is remembered by some of the overtures to his operas, Rossini likewise, with the addition of *Le Barbier* (*sic*) and some arias. Meyerbeer proved a dead horse when an attempt was made to revive *Les Huguenots* in London some years ago. Only in Germany was there any promise on a large or important scale and there romantic music had become formulated. Weber was thirty-six and had composed both *Der Freischütz* and the *Concertstück* for piano and orchestra. *Euryanthe* followed in 1823—and Weber's operas *in toto* are impossible nowadays.

To criticise in detail a book written in this style would be wasted labour. César Franck was a musician of pure mind and noble imagination, but he lacked that kind of cleverness which reveals to great artists the scope of their genius. His successes are indubitable, but there are too few of them, and too many failures, or near-failures. He was by by most accounts an inspiring teacher and a most lovable man, yet his influence on a generation of French composers was on the whole unfortunate, since it foisted upon them a teutonic attitude to music which hindered them from expressing themselves naturally. With care and intelligence a scholarly critic might make of this subject a study of considerable value. But enthusiasm is not enough, and Mr. Demuth's methods of advocacy are not calculated to win converts for Franck's music. You cannot bring down high pheasants with a blunderbuss, nor play billiards with a crooked poker.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

A BLAKE SCHOLAR

Blake Studies. By GEOFFREY KEYNES. *Rupert Hart-Davis.* 42*s.*

"Books on William Blake have become fashionable in recent years and their value has usually borne a definite relation to the amount of study expended by the author on his subject." To this temperate pronouncement made in the preface to the present volume, Mr. Keynes' own works are no exception. For forty years he has devoted himself to Blake scholarship, and the bibliography of his writings on Blake runs to seven pages of the present text. It would scarcely be an exaggeration to say that Mr. Keynes knows more about the provenance and whereabouts of every document relating to Blake than anyone has known since Blake himself. His Nonesuch edition of Blake's writings has established the text that has been responsible for so many rash volumes written by those undergoing, or resisting, the tremendous impact of Blake's genius, which is like nothing else in the language. The present beautiful volume contains two hundred pages of text and forty-eight plates, many of them new, and some of them of great beauty like the designs for the *Pilgrim's Progress,* hitherto unpublished in England.

The seventeen short chapters are to be regarded as an appendix, or appendices, to the only two authoritative lives of Blake that have as yet been written, Gilchrist's (published in 1863) and Miss Mona Wilson's (published in 1927 and recently reprinted). Mr. Keynes has never been concerned with interpreting Blake, but it is worthy of note (in the light of the sentence quoted above) that he gives his blessing to two interpreters, J. Wicksteed and Northrop Frye.

Blake bibliography is of more than academic interest at a time when new material may still come to light. Mr. Ellic Howe, for example, has the credit of the discovery, in the Apprentice Register at Stationer's Hall, of the entry of Blake's bond under the date of August 4th, 1772; and that keen terrier of Blake's remains, Mr. Ruthven Todd, is acknowledged in several contexts as the discoverer of valuable pieces of historical evidence. One of the most important of these new documents is a letter from Blake to one of the Wedg-

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wood brothers, written in 1815. Mr. Keynes has the gift of using such shreds of evidence, as archaeologists use potsherds, to reconstruct a human situation—not in a romantic sense, indeed, for he gives no more than the simple facts and their context. This letter is revealing, not in itself, but because it affords us a glimpse of the poet during the years of his deepest obscurity, "earning his bread in a room littered with *terrines, salads* and *butter boats*" that he was employed in drawing and engraving for Etruria. It was during this time that Blake was engaged upon his great visionary poem *Jerusalem*, and there is something profoundly noble in the balance of this picture—the lofty vision of the mystic counterbalanced with that humble manual work. Another example of this kind of human reconstruction is the observation that the famous notebook called the *Rossetti Manuscript*, in which for years Blake used to write his poems and intimate thoughts, until it was crammed from end to end, had originally belonged to Robert Blake, the younger brother who died young, and to whom the poet was deeply devoted. Blake, lonely as he was in his deepest preoccupations, found perhaps a sense of companionship in the very pages of the notebook that had belonged to the brother who still continued to visit and inspire him in vision.

What Blake must have found harder to endure with patience than neglect or hostility, was the patronising incomprehension of the well-meaning. Hayley was his heaviest trial, but Mr. Keynes traces the outlines of another relationship, towards the end of Blake's life, with Dr. Thornton. Immediately after the completion of what is now regarded as one of the finest works of art ever produced in England, the *Job* designs, Blake was employed to make a series of woodcuts for Dr. Thornton's school edition of Virgil. Thornton was so displeased with these superb woodcuts that he was with difficulty dissuaded by Linnell and Sir Thomas Lawrence from having them all recut by a professional wood-engraver, and, as it was, published them with an apologetic note. Mr. Keynes reproduces a plate showing the disastrous results of one such piece of "improvement." But life had by now taught Blake not to take issue with the world on its own ground. For Hayley, for the Wedgwoods, for Thornton, Blake carried out the humblest tasks with humility. But let those who care to do so turn to Blake's marginalia to Thornton's *Lord's Prayer*, to see how the great mystic dealt with the busy doctor in the sphere in which Blake, and not Dr. Thornton, was supreme. Blake had learned to the last farthing how much—and how little—was due to Cæsar.

The main thread of this book is bibliographical, and experts will wish to possess it for purposes of reference. Those who, like myself, are all but impervious to facts of that kind, will value it for the fingers of light cast on a man whose life was so consistently at one with his genius that no fact about him can seem irrelevant or trifling.

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Broken Images. By JOHN GUEST. *Longmans.* 10s. 6d.

Journals are sometimes kept for the most practical of reasons. The literary man may need one as the builder needs a yard, for storage and a pride in possession. There are scientific journals, there are devotional journals, there are even journals which bring their owners a cheque every time publication is threatened. But the ordinary man who puts himself to the trouble of setting down his daily reflections probably knows only a desire to "get it off his chest" and can find no more sympathetic or unprotesting audience than himself. When he was serving with the army Mr. John Guest kept a journal and now that he has published extracts from it under the title *Broken Images* we can see that he, however, wrote neither professionally nor as an ordinary man: he wrote as an artist, as one who, when confronted by the beautiful or the novel, felt he simply had to do something about it. He no longer composed poetry or painted so what could be more natural than this, the most private and personal of all literary work, to satisfy his need? He wrote, off and on, throughout his whole service in England, North Africa and Italy—the journal was sent in the form of long letters to a friend with no thought of publication—and the ultimate result has been to provide us with a book that will give pleasure to anyone who values good writing.

Mr. Guest spent the first few months of training in a state of not very dignified self-pity and he has had the courage not to disguise the fact. After all, a literary education such as Mr. Guest received is not the best form of preparation for war. The mood does not last and it is not what one remembers of the book. One mentions it because it marks the beginning of a struggle which thousands of other civilians turned soldiers must have experienced—the struggle, sometimes deliberate, sometimes instinctive, to retain a civilised outlook in a time of barbarism. If Mr. Guest has any politics he does not mention them, he is hardly a religious man, and his chief source of strength for the struggle seems to have been a great sensitiveness to natural beauty. He fights horror with beauty and the process can be seen at work in such a passage as the following:

> Since then the weather has been perfect—frost at nights, but blue cloudless days with a silvery morning to golden evening light: and all the countryside so fresh and green and vivid, with something secretive and still in the air, as though the earth were preparing for spring as a surprise, working softly and furtively—but dropping little hints, clumsily, like a child—and you pretending not to notice. I *know*, although I have not even seen the buds, that violets are preparing; and I know too that, although I am forewarned, I shall still see with a thrill of surprise the first moth-wing leaves trembling out of the twigs to dry in the sunlight. That yellow-green colour! The leaves so thin they seem scarcely to hold back the light.
>
> But in these banks and fields, where one might look for robins' nests, and larks' nests under the tufts, and the little woven dome of the willow-wren, are iron mines which, at a touch, leap into the air and blast men to a stained rag of battle-dress. I saw a leg standing in the mud here for a whole day before it was removed. . . .

And then he goes on to talk of the night sky. Some might detect a certain complacency, or at least wilfulness, in the way Mr. Guest places all the emphasis on natural beauty, but they would be wrong. His most vivid writing is not about the ugly side of war partly because he thinks battle incidents are boring to write about and still more boring to read, but mainly because the discipline of beauty was part of his struggle to survive. It would be wrong to give the impression that this book is over-solemn. Mr. Guest's sense of humour and his eye for character gives considerable entertainment; and there are many passages, such as the account of the Vatican, which put one in mind of some of our best travel writing—*Eothen*, say, or Beckford's *Italy*.

P. H. NEWBY

LIGHT ON TITO

Whirlwind: An Account of Marshal Tito's Rise to Power. By STEPHEN CLISSOLD. *The Cresset Press.* 15s.

The author of this book, who speaks of what he knows, set out to write an unbiased account of the war in Yugoslavia and has succeeded tolerably well. His great virtue is that he clears away the myths about Mihailovic—but in a sympathetic way which explains what was wrong with that stout-hearted but wooden-headed soldier and why his movement degenerated into an obnoxious rabble—and explains some of the more important reasons why the partisans prevailed. His great defect is that he misses the most important reason of all—that the partisans prevailed not only because they were well led, knew how to profit from the German and Ustas massacres in Serbia and elsewhere, or learnt the true art of guerilla warfare, but because they stood for a new and revolutionary scale of values in a country where the old order could no longer be restored. Pleasantly and skilfully written though it is, his book is robbed by this defect of much of the swing and savour which marked those astonishing years. What gave the partisan movement its tenacity and grip was not the long arm of Moscow—as later events would seem to have sufficiently proved—or the mere desire to defend life and property, since local deals with the enemy were always possible after 1942, but the surging and passionate belief in a new order and a new life.

This is far from saying that Mr. Clissold is not worth reading. There is no other book in English which covers the whole development of the war as well as this. For someone who is so obviously out of sympathy with social revolution, the author has handled his material with admirable balance and moderation. It is no part of his purpose to trace the dilemma of the British Foreign Office, when, early in 1943, it was faced with the demand from Middle East Headquarters to accept support of the partisans in place of the Chetniks, or to describe the grudging and reluctant manner in which this militarily necessary change was made. But he says enough to suggest why it was that the partisan leaders thought themselves justified in being suspicious of the British missions which began to arrive in the late winter of 1943, and why they were concerned to reduce "to the barest minimum the influence of the West on the political, social and economic pattern which they were elaborating for the Yugoslavia of to-morrow." The full story of the British part in wartime Yugoslavia remains to be told. *Whirlwind* makes a useful contribution towards this by publishing for the first time the account of what passed between Mr. Churchill and Marshal Tito during their memorable interview at Caserta.

What it was exactly that caused the breach between the Yugoslav leaders and the Cominform is left to the reader's judgment, for Mr. Clissold's account stops with the end of the war and makes no attempt to delve into the complexities of political development. His last picture of Marshal Tito is of the devoted Leninist reading once again the old directives of the Comintern of 1941. The basis of Tito's life, even though success had brought him power and plenty, "remained the close-knit comradeship of the inner Party circle, the discipline of the Central Committee and its Moscow directives." Here it seems likely that Mr. Clissold, as at several other points in his story, has resorted to imagination unsupported by any real knowledge of what was going on. The published correspondence between Belgrade and Moscow has since shown that relations were already less than good. All the more suggestive, in the light of what happened later, is the account of the "secret stranglehold" of a conspiratorial Communist party which maintained a "rigidly centralistic control over every branch of the national life" and did not scruple to stow away in gaol any who, like the radical peasant demagogue Dragoljub Jovanović, should dare to question its decree. But then, Mr. Clissold does not like social upheaval—and his suggestions have to be judged in that light. BASIL DAVIDSON

NEW NOVELS

A Sort of Traitors. By NIGEL BALCHIN. *Collins.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

The Moment of Truth. By STORM JAMESON. *Macmillan.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Boys and Girls Come Out to Play. By NIGEL DENNIS. *Eyre & Spottiswoode.* 11*s.* 6*d.*

A young man walks along the street and into the Park. He is very pale, and he holds himself rigidly to prevent himself from glancing over his shoulder. He is very young, and he looks like a student, but he is, probably, a scientist. In the Park he sits down on a bench in a dark corner and takes out a packet of cigarettes, but he cannot get one out of the packet because of the violent shaking of his fingers. After a few moments he is joined by an older man. They exchange a few sentences, speaking quietly and urgently. The young man hands over an envelope which shakes for a moment like a flag in the wind before disappearing into the pocket of the older man. Then they both get up, and with the same tense casualness walk off in different directions. But before he has strolled a hundred yards the young man has to rush into a public lavatory where, after a dreadful struggle with a penny, he has a violent attack of diarrhœa.

The young man, of course, is a "traitor"; the envelope contains secret formulae. No scene just like this occurs in any of the books under review; I have composed it as a rough illustration of the kind of material in which two of them, at any rate, deal. One can see how enormously tempting such material is. The great public drama of the twentieth century working itself out in the conscience and the bowels, a struggle at once intimate and majestic, the atmosphere of a high-class thriller, and the strong local interest in the question of whether, between the salt mines and the millionaire's love-nest, there is a place for *us*. It is natural for novelists to feel that there is gold in these grass roots, rich dust and even great nuggets, and that they have only to be carried away to become currency. And it is true, there *is* gold there, but only the great can use it as currency, and in other hands it proves to be that fairy gold which turns to ashes, the ashes of last week's newspapers.

Both Mr. Balchin and Miss Jameson have been in the gold rush, and it is a tribute to Mr. Balchin's talent that he has brought back some genuine dust. His young man is called Marriott, and he is a member of a team of biologists who, after years of work, have produced results which can be applied to control epidemic infection. To Marriott, as to his chief, Professor Sewell, and their fellow-workers, control means only one thing; to the Government, which hears about the matter on the eve of publication, it means another possibility—it could be used against the country in war. This situation, as presented in *A Sort of Traitors*, is brilliantly plausible, and the imposition of what is in effect a Government ban on publication is put across with a delicately exact feeling for the esoteric atmosphere, so friendly and so merciless, of British semi-public life. Sewell and Marriott react strongly, each for a different complex of reasons. They are both muddled and uncertain, but though Sewell is done with the familiar Balchin expertise, Marriott is much the better study—the naive, immature, idealistic, decent and dangerous young man on whom so much depends. Since the Government control all the legal means of publication, both Sewell and Marriott are driven to considering other means, and Marriott gets his chance through a malevolently-contrived introduction to a foreign agent. But then, instead of the tragedy in which he might have involved our feelings, Balchin produces one of his characteristic neat "gripping" endings, which reduces his whole book to the level of a high-grade entertainment. And, of course, it is very good entertainment, told with all Balchin's craftsmanship and flair. But as I finished it I recalled a remark which he made in a magazine article published in 1947. "Literary gents," he wrote, "always make me nervous. They obviously give their whole time and energy to the pursuit of literature, whereas I have to work for my living." Balchin's understanding of scientific research, with its excitement, its repetitive tedium, and its awful hours of low grade clerical work; his ability to create his own important territory somewhere between the lab. and Whitehall; and his portrayal of Marriott—these are things which make it a matter of real regret that he is not able to devote more of his time and energy to the pursuit of literature.

In Mr. Balchin's book we are still in the cold war; in Miss Jameson's the shooting has started. Britain is on the point of being over-run, and for the group of people with whom the book is concerned there are various possibilities—evacuation to America, the maquis, collaboration, or passive acceptance of whatever is coming. In particular, there is a clash between the potential resistance leader and the potential collaborator, and it illustrates the danger of trying to annex a piece of the public drama for literary use. The young communist's apologia, for instance, is intolerably vapid, dated even as a parody: "Why turn your back on the future? Do you want it to kick your ass?" Since the great argument has not been emotionally or mentally digested, it tends to issue in incoherent intensity. "For some people it's right to go—of course. Others . . . for us—danger—hunger—the defeat—maybe our life itself. . . ." Danger—hunger—the defeat; they are clearly tempting subjects, but the results of succumbing to temptation are superficiality and pretentiousness.

Mr. Nigel Dennis, in *Boys and Girls Come Out to Play*, also deals in political attitudes, but he does not merely grub about in the grass-roots for the gold dust of ready-made drama. The "satirical adventure story" of Max Divver, the progressive journalist whose politics are the product of timidity, intellectual snobbishness, and a furtive ambition, is a shrewd and beguiling piece of work. The adventures take place in Poland on the eve of the German attack; there, under the influence of Larry Streeter, a tough and eminently non-progressive mining engineer, Divver's enlightened attitudes, so painfully acquired but so insecurely fastened, begin to slip. This rake's progress of emotional and intellectual dishonesty is told in a cool, sardonic style which nevertheless serves Mr. Dennis well in presenting Divver, not as a satirist's puppet, but as a complex, puzzled, fundamentally likeable character who never loses our sympathy. This, in a book which is extremely intelligent, always entertaining, and sometimes very funny indeed, is a genuine feat of the novelist's art. Mr. Dennis, his publishers tell us, is an Englishman who has been working in America for some years on the staff of *Time*. His humour is generally tough and pointed; he has perhaps learned something from novels such as Budd Schulberg's *What Makes Sammy Run* and John O'Hara's *Appointment in Samarra*. There are incidents, however, such as the visit to Melmoth Grieg, the great Polish writer, immensely old, immensely distinguished, immensely empty, in which there appears a note of a casual, elegant, faintly snobbish wit which is very English. The combination is not only entertaining in this present book, but promises well for the future.

J. D. SCOTT

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> Do not forget: this visitation
> Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.

Such an exhortation is senseless, so the Ghost must really be up to something else. In fact, it is creating a hasty diversion. For Hamlet is distressed far less by his mother's known adultery than by the suspicion that she was privy to her husband's murder, and now he is on the verge of wringing a confession from her. But the Ghost

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seeks only vengeance upon Claudius; its plan is endangered if Hamlet is suffered to pursue his private inquiry into Gertrude's deeper guilt; it therefore breaks in upon the interview and with gestures (described for us by Hamlet as "piteous action") demonstrates that she has its forgiveness and must be aspersed no more. The Closet-scene represents, in fact, "King Hamlet's silent reconciliation with Gertrude."

Hamlet is now awkwardly placed. He cannot avenge his father without exposing his mother to suspicion; he cannot even kill himself without the same risk. There is only one way out: to be killed by someone else. Soon he has evidence of his enemies being here abundantly willing to oblige him, and it is inconceivable that he should enter the final fencing-match blind to its true significance. But it has become his only wish to spare his mother pain. He therefore makes her a speech (which he pretends he is addressing to Laertes) declaring that his accusations have been the result of insanity; and thereupon he goes open-eyed to his death. Nevertheless, Claudius, in preparing the poisoned goblet, has over-reached himself. For the queen drinks and dies, thus passing beyond the reach of opprobrium; and Hamlet, whom we have been accustomed to judge so dilatory, kills the usurper within seconds of being freed to do so.

Dr. Flatter unites an up-to-date zest for interpreting Shakespeare's text as so much difficult "old score" with an old-fashioned predilection for treating the play as the sole remaining original source for the study of a given period of Danish history. But whereas the cardinal facts of a remote and complex historical action may well be recoverable only by inference, it is altogether different with a work of art. The proportions and emphasis such a work appears to bear are, within reasonable limits, the proportions and emphasis it was originally designed to bear. If Shakespeare had meant his Hamlet to regard Gertrude's possible complicity in murder as "far more important" than her adultery, he would have made his Hamlet show it. If Hamlet's dilemma was to be the difficulty of killing Claudius without disgracing Gertrude the hero would certainly take us into his confidence about this as about much else. If the climax of the play was to be a son's resolving to go to his death and thus "secure the comparative happiness of a mother still alive rather than avenge a father who is a mere ghost," Shakespeare would surely have left the facts of the case patent to persons far less clever and pertinacious than Dr. Flatter. This is an able book, full of observation and arguments of both general and scholarly interest. But the main contention, conceivably, is injudicious—a product of that hazardous "ambition of critical discovery" against which the greatest of Shakespeare's commentators has warned us.

J. I. M. STEWART

RED HERRINGS

The Three Fears. By JONATHAN STAGGE. *Michael Joseph.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

So Many Doors. By E. R. PUNSHON. *Gollancz.* 9*s.*

No Last Words. By BELTON COBB. *Longmans.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The Double Death of Frederic Belot. By CLAUDE AVELINE. *Dennis Dobson.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Death Under The Stars. By VICARS BELL. *Faber.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

The Journeying Boy. By MICHAEL INNES. *Gollancz.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

The Little Sister. By RAYMOND CHANDLER. *Hamish Hamilton.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Blondie Iscariot. By EDGAR LUSTGARTEN. *Museum Press.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Doors Open. By MICHAEL GILBERT. *Hodder & Stoughton.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Messrs. Webb & Wheeler are a prolific pair of detection writers under their three joint pseudonyms, Jonathan Stagge, Q. Patrick and Patrick Quentin. At times they hit such a rate of output as to be in danger of writing themselves silly. But a good plot acts like a tonic on jaded authors; and *The Three Fears* has a subtlety and suavity of construction of which even Mrs. Christie might be proud. The scene of crime is a New England seaside resort where two leading ladies of the American stage find themselves cheek by jowl on summer vacation. One of them, the Divine Daphne, suffers from three obsessional fears—Poison, Fire and Keys. (Why on earth Keys? You may well ask; but it will be a waste of your time to look for an answer). The clash of prima donnas turns abruptly from high comedy to tragedy, when someone starts to strum on Daphne's obsessions. Discretion prevents me saying more. But I guarantee that all but the smartest readers will go barking up the wrong tree, only to find themselves out on a limb. *The Three Fears* makes a vintage year for Jonathan Stagge.

In the new Punshon we must make do with *vin ordinaire*. This is the twenty-sixth of the Bobby Owen series: and if the passage of time has not yet softened Bobby's brain it has been hardening the arteries of his constant readers. Our blood pressure has now reached such a height that only a stroke of originality or genius is liable to affect us noticeably: and I am afraid that neither of these qualities can be discerned in *So Many Doors*. So we just sit back and goggle as Bobby races from London to Cornwall to sort out Mr. Punshon's latest tangle of bad hats, raising our eyebrows mildly as one astonishing coincidence whizzes past, and murmuring faint applause when the last bodies are decently removed from sight—with a splash into the ocean.

Mr. Cobb has a *penchant* for poison. In *No Last Words* a police Superintendent swigs off a glass of poison in his hotel bedroom. He must have known who filled the glass; but he dies unable to utter the name of his assassin. Some one was taking a big risk! With seven suspects to line up, and a peach of a motive up his sleeve, Mr. Cobb had the makings of a first-rate story within his grasp. But the dreary routine of policemen recapitulating their thoughts (that bane of English detection) slows the narrative down and lets the excitement leak out. Even so, despite its long-windedness, *No Last Words* makes much better reading than most on the library list.

In England, detection has always been a poor relation of literature. But Edgar Allan Poe invested it at birth with some literary pretensions which it has never quite lost. In recent years reputable writers such as G. K. Chesterton, Dorothy L. Sayers, Ronald Knox and Cecil Day Lewis have even raised it somewhat in cultural esteem. In France, however, detection has always been treated with well-educated scorn. (The French indeed have never produced a detective author of any merit until Simenon—and he turns out to be a Belgian!) Some courage therefore was required of M. Claude Aveline, a writer of distinction in other fields, when he launched out a few years ago into a detective trilogy. He tried to justify his audacity to his *confrères* by a defiant preface in defence of detection as a legitimate form of art. This preface together with a translation of one volume of the trilogy are now published under the title *The Double Death of Frederic Belot*. The novel is worth reading, but the preface is not, except as a curious example of author's *angst*. In this enlightened country "teckers" are defended, not by prefaces, but by being read, shamelessly and voraciously, by every class of society. Their merits are not assessed on their beautiful prose but on their efficacy, like that of other patent medicines, to alleviate fatigue, to restore the convalescent, to fortify the mental processes and to lighten the implacable load of civilisation.

Judged by this standard *The Double Death of Frederic Belot* is not very effective. The plot is rather strange. Two men exactly alike are found shot in a Paris flat within a few feet of each other. Both of them seem to be Belot, a detective of the Sûreté. The solution of this problem of identity and of how two Belots came by their death is most ingenious and involved in complicated psychology. M. Aveline is too concientious a novelist to treat his characters as puppets: their minds must be probed, and their thoughts justified even more than their actions. Meanwhile the reader has to remain a passive onlooker, waiting for the facts to come to light: and it is this forced apathy, without a chance to match our wits against the author's, that removes the book from the tense arena of detection to the instructive lecture platform of the crime novel. Fine writing may one day find scope for itself in the detective story but M. Aveline has not yet hit on the clue to their combination.

Mr. Vicars Bell agrees with M. Aveline that detection can do with a little uplift. The characters, in *Death under the Stars* are given every chance to unroll their personalities, while the plot is left to fend for itself. The body of an unpopular individual is found electrocuted in the middle of a village at 6 a.m.; the village is not yet on the grid, so where did the shock come from? Any duffer can spot the answer in a jiffy. But Mr. Bell's educated, whimsical style carries one pleasantly along the trail of the pale pink herrings.

Brief reference to the four thrillers will suffice. Two of them are so brilliant that it would be a shame to give away their plots. The other two are so inferior to their authors' previous reputation that silence is the kindest criticism. Michael Innes has surpassed himself in *The Journeying*

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Company Meeting

CADBURY BROTHERS LTD.

MR. L. J. CADBURY ON RATIONING

The 50th ordinary general meeting of Cadbury Brothers Ltd., was held on July 18th at Bournville, Birmingham.

Mr. Laurence J. Cadbury, the chairman, said: The accounts and report this year contain, for the first time, the consolidated profit and loss account and consolidated balance-sheet of this company and its subsidiaries. Altogether, our group comprises 20 companies, 10 of which are overseas, and has total assets of just over £32 million.

With the accounts we have also sent to shareholders a small illustrated booklet showing some of the trends in our business over the last 10 years.

You are all aware that the rationing of chocolate and confectionery will be reintroduced as from Aug. 14 and at the 4oz. level for two months. It is a decision which we have received with regret, not only because of its effect upon our own trade, but because freedom of sale for our industry was definitely to be an experiment and a guide for Government policy in similar directions.

The history of the experiment is briefly as follows: In the early part of the year the Ministry proposed a partial scheme at a weekly consumption of 4½oz. With the rest of the industry we advised against a partial scheme and gave it as our view that if the industry could achieve 4½oz. a week there was a very fair chance of success for complete de-rationing. 4½oz. at current prices would involve the public in spending £30 million per annum more than last year. It would have been at the rate of £105 million a year for the country—double the amount spent before the war.

When any article is taken off the ration two calculations have to be made. First, what stocks should be available to meet the immediate rush to buy, the initial demand; secondly the level at which the trade in due course settles down without undue inconvenience to the shopping public.

It is clear now that we had not accumulated sufficient stocks in shops and warehouses to meet the initial demand. It was quickly known that stocks were inadequate and this stimulated buying. Inevitably great publicity was given to the subject and the effects were cumulative. It was also unfortunate that the de-rationing of chocolate and confectionery was an isolated event and that many other articles of food remained controlled.

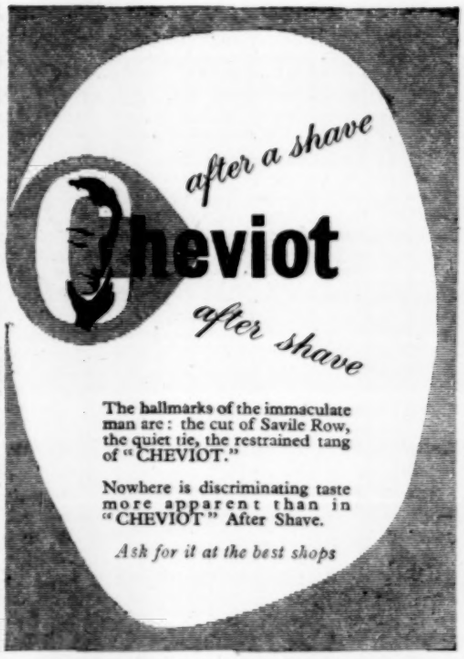
As a result of all this we regard the position still as abnormal and far from being a proof that the level of demand during the last three months is any indication of what it will be when it reaches a more stable position.

De-rationing of chocolate and sweets took place in several countries in Europe last year. Amongst them was Belgium, and it is interesting to note the experience of that country. During the period of rationing the consumption of chocolate was at the rate of 200 grammes per month. Rationing was abandoned in 1948 and the sales rose to 350 grammes. But they have fallen during the first four months of this year to 225, a drop of over 30 per cent. in demand after the initial months of free sale.

If it had been possible to continue the experiment in this country it might well have been proved that in the long run there would have been a rough approximation of demand and supply. Had this been so there was a distinct chance of further sugar being made available. Unfortunately for us this small increase in sugar supplies, which seemed possible earlier in the year, is now not only out of the question but the dollar situation has meant an actual reduction. For some weeks the Minister of Food has been under pressure to reintroduce rationing. We are glad he declined to do so until it was clear that the dollar situation would make it impossible for him to give us the raw materials to bridge what may eventually be only a small gap.

The Minister's decision means a postponement of a return to the free and competitive conditions we regard as essential if we are to achieve the industrial efficiency and enterprise which the Chancellor demands. It has been our experience during the last few weeks that free sales and the prospect of a return to competition unquestionably brought about a quickening of interest on the part of both management and workers. The step back to rationing is a great blow to our hopes and we can only trust that its reimposition will not be unduly prolonged.

The report was adopted.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Three years ago we inaugurated the North American Air Express Editon whereby readers in New York receive THE NEW STATESMAN & NATION on Friday afternoon (particulars of the subscription are given on page 106). As facilities become available similar services are being started all over the world and services have already commenced to the countries mentioned below. The sum given is the amount, in sterling, of an annual subscription; half-yearly and quarterly subscriptions being pro rata. On arrival at the main airport (on the day mentioned below) subscribers' copies are immediately put into the local post.
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Boy, a dashing adventure story with a precocious schoolboy for its hero. "Mystery, Detection, Character and Suspense" says the dust cover—truthfully for once. Can you wish for more at a gulp? Mr. J. B. Priestley gave a favourable preview to *The Little Sister* in *The New Statesman* earlier this year. The astringent flavour that Mr. Priestley relishes is not quite as uncommon as he supposes among tough Californian thriller-writers. But Raymond Chandler is certainly far ahead of the others in the sophisticated wise-cracks with which he punctuates this Hollywood saga of crime, drink and sex. *Blondie Iscariot* and *The Doors Open* show the drab depths to which the writers of *A Case To Answer* and *Close Quarters* can sink, when they waste their talents on sensationalism. RALPH PARTRIDGE

CRITIC OF EXPLOSIONS

Vision Ahead. By Air Commodore P. HUSKINSON. *Werner Laurie.* 11*s.* 6*d.*

This is a stimulating war-book by a courageous man; but a book which rarely rises above the level of average journalism. Huskinson was Director of Armament Development in the Ministry of Aircraft Production from 1940 to 1941, when he was blinded in a Luftwaffe attack on London. Within less than a year he had become a most active President of the Air Armaments Board, an arduous post for which, in spite of his disability, he seems to have been fitted.

In each of the twenty brief chapters of this book Air Commodore Huskinson gives us glimpses of his full-blooded generosity and loyalty to his own colleagues, and of his aggressive hostility to ministerial bureaucracy. It is when he is assaulting the bland apathy and parsimony of the Ministries and their servants between the two wars that Huskinson writes most vigorously and sardonically. One notes that, in the Index, the item "Treasury, economies of," is prominent. The passive bureaucrat is for him, as for so many others, the deadly enemy of efficiency, and he lashes out at him with acidity and relish. Huskinson has no use at all for the written "memo." His personality reflects much of the two men whom he clearly admires enormously—Bomber Harris and Lord Beaverbrook.

Vision Ahead contains little fresh military information for the serious student of bombs, guns, rockets, turrets and bomb disposal, on which subjects the Air Commodore is a professional expert. One wonders if he has suffered from an over-zealous censor. The book, however, usefully rehearses the failure of the Treasury and of the Air Ministry to provide the Air Force with the bombs they needed until late in World War II. It emphasises the early failure to produce an effective anti-tank projectile for our aircraft, or to make any organised provision at all for dealing with unexploded bombs during the first series of Luftwaffe attacks on this country. But Air Commodore Huskinson is not merely a critic of inept departments. He writes constructively on the subject of destruction. He gives full credit to the civilian scientists, engineers and producers who helped him, and is particularly generous to his American colleagues.

Vision Ahead is not a great war-book. There is a lack of sequence in, and within, the chapters, which prevents the author from developing fully any serious military thesis either on the tactical or strategic plane. Nevertheless, there is an abundance of military common sense in what he writes, and he adds to the stimulus of the knowledgeable pamphleteer the salt of some fine touches of irony. I find myself unable to agree with everything he writes. Huskinson still quotes the R.A.F.'s claim of 185 aircraft shot down on September 15th, 1940, as though the Air Ministry had never discredited this figure. Also, he regards the rocket as the weapon of the future for fighter aircraft. But surely he should distinguish between the use of fighters for offensive and defensive work in this context. ASHER LEE

The Stock Exchange Official Year Book, 1949. Vol. I. *Thomas Skinner.* Complete edition, £6.

This well-known reference book is following the fashion set by the London Telephone Directory. Last year the single volume exceeded 3,500 pages and weighed 9¼ lb. In order to overcome the difficulties of printing and binding, not to mention using, such an unwieldy volume, the publishers have decided to produce the work in two parts. Volume I is now available, and it is hoped to publish Volume II in August. It should be stressed that the two volumes together will contain everything the old single volume did. The present volume does not contain the large Commercial and Industrial section and four smaller sections dealing with Finance, Land and Mines. It does, however, include all the usual information relating to the other groups of securities and companies, in addition to the general information and statistical section. Special mention should be made that particulars are given of the British Transport Commission and the British Electricity Authority, and the compensation value is given for the various stocks assumed.

The Maxims of Marcel Proust. Edited, with a translation, by JUSTIN O'BRIEN. *Oxford.* 16*s.*

It was Aldous Huxley who first noticed that the architectural vastness of *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* could be compared to the *Maxims* of La Rochefoucauld—saying that Proust was La Rochefoucauld writ large. But Mr. O'Brien has gone a step further in the comparison and has had the idea of removing the adipose tissue from certain passages of Proust and laying bare a perfect epigram or aphorism. In doing this he found that, on an average, such sentences occurred once in every nine pages, and he has printed them, with the French text opposite his translation, under the headings Man, Society, Love, Art and Time and Memory—Proust's main preoccupations. One's first impression from the collection is of a certain lack of wit. But they were not written for brilliance of effect, and gradually one realises that one is reading a book of "wisdom," and that Proust is in the tradition of the French *moralistes*. There is no attempt at the easy paradox or the superficial playing with words or with ideas. The nearest Proust gets to a "clever" maxim is when he says "the affectation of praiseworthy impulses is not the only cover for vicious ones. A more novel screen is the exhibition of the vicious impulses so as not to seem to be hiding them"; but even here his interest is in the truth of the remark rather than in the brilliance of the idea. The following example is typical of most of the maxims in the book. "You build your life for a certain person, and when finally it is ready to receive her she fails to come, then eventually disappears from your thoughts altogether, leaving you to live a prisoner in what was intended only for her." Mr. O'Brien's translation is good, and he has written an interesting and informative introduction.

Week-end Competitions

No. 1,014

Set by Richard Lister

The children will soon be home for the holidays. The usual prizes are offered for 200 words of a greeting scene between parents and offspring in the manner of one of the following: Angela Brazil, Elizabeth Bowen, Rudyard Kipling (*Stalky*), Charles Dickens, Dean Farrar, H. A. Vachell (*The Hill*). Entries by August 2.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 1,011

Set by Gerald Giradot

The usual prizes are offered for the opening 200 words of the sort of autobiography you most dislike.

Report by Gerald Giradot

How to make bores interesting—it is the classic problem of the novelist. Diplomats, society women, professional persons with an exaggerated idea of their own importance, this class of biographer is evidently the most detested. But it is the hardest to parody successfully: they display their own vices so shame-

lessly that the parodist has to carry exaggeration beyond the beyond. But the field is wide—the arch, the highbrow, the hearty, the theatrical, the cliche-monger, the original, the Southerner—as many kinds as there are types; and most of them find a devil's champion among the entries. To reduce the pile to twenty contestants was comparatively simple. From then on it was hard going. Particularly difficult to discard were Hugh MacColt's "Gleanings from the Glens," Mrs. Radnedge's Soulful Child, Michael Orslev's Southerner, Arnold Lovell's Cabinet Minister R. B. Browning's delicate facetious, H. V. S. Page's Heavyweight, A. J. B.'s Aegean Sunset, Esme Keher's Mit European and Gavin Ewart's really too genuine "remembering Mama." The six guineas are divided equally between the following.

The other day Grandioso, who is, I suppose, our greatest living music critic, said to me, "Helena, your voice grows ever more beautiful. I suppose that even when you were a child you were half human and half nightingale?" I suppose I was. At least, I remember my mother telling my aunt (my father's sister, a cousin of Lady Tremolo) that Bassoon, the great conductor, had mentioned to dear Lady Piacevole that I had a voice in a million. I must, at that time, have been about six years old, so the venerable old Maestro, who was always extremely kind to me, evidently had a musical perception of no mean order. It was about the same time that I reduced Canon Maudlin, a great favourite with us, to tears with my rendering of "Home, Sweet Home." I remember his saying "Such soul, such soul!" and recollect thinking, in my childish way, that, as he had the cure of souls, he must be a good judge of such things. Canon Maudlin, by the way, was a cousin of Lord Vibrato. But *revenons à nos moutons*—in this case, my voice. G. J. BLUNDELL

Old Parker the garbage collector said "Don't say it. I'll better guess."

So I sat and told him.

I told him about when I was little, about the time Pop socked me for breaking Annabella's first tooth, and I told him and told him: all the beautiful things and what made them beautiful, all the ugly things and what made *them* beautiful.

"This is no autobiography," I said to him, because he was my brother and stank divinely of kipper and stub ends, "this is me, Saroyan, and I'm telling you, see, I'm just telling you.

"I'm telling you that round the block from Mogodopa's—they used to call Pop that, because he was a mug and a dope and they were Greek or Armenian or American or something and couldn't pronounce the word right—there used to be a sweet kid, a girl called Bill. Don't be surprised," I said, "if I tell you something: God's pants, she was beautiful! A honey. As beautiful as, well, as the rest of the world. Everyone. No one.

"One day it rained, and a small boy walked round the block from Mogodopa's. At everything he met with, the small boy called Saroyan, showed surprise. He looked, saw and showed surprise. He looked and it was fine. Everything. He saw and they were beautiful. Everybody. He was called Saroyan and he was small and beautiful and had lived a hundred and four years, although he was only two and six months and two days and an hour and a half and a few odd seconds.

"That was my childhood," I added, "and I guess you'll want to know about when I married. . . ."

PETER ZADEK

I THANK WHATEVER GODS MAY BE
By Brigadier Crump

The doctor chuckled as he turned to my mother.

"Eight and a half pounds or I'll eat my stethoscope. And the young fella roars like a trooper."

Thus I arrived upon this vale of tears

". . . trailing clouds of glory"

as some poet put it, though doubtless the doctor was far too busy to notice these at the time. I came, incidentally, as my forefathers had come, without benefit of analgesia or any of the ante-natal finicking that people seem to find so necessary nowadays.

My father was in the gunroom when the news was brought to him. He was never a man to exhibit emotion, and the story goes that he merely grunted, dashed off a letter to Eton and another to Sandhurst, and went straight out with the Belvoir as though nothing had happened, but I was told later that he (a superb horseman) never rode with more reckless abandon than on that day. My father, by the way, needed no Royal Commission on Population to remind him of his duty; mine were the thirteenth pair of little feet to go pattering about the time-hallowed rooms of Pippin Manor (and there were more to follow). STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

Just half a century ago the Good Fairies were bestowing cradle gifts on the Newest Arrival at 3, Lexham Crescent, South Kensington.

"Health!" said one.

"A keen sense of fun," said the next.

"Modest but sufficient, means," said the third.

"Friends—human and animal," said the fourth.

Bang! The Wicked Fairy emerged from her hiding-place in the toy cupboard. Waving her ebony wand, she pronounced the infant's doom.

"*She will be a Scribbler!*"

Alas, from earliest years the curse was fulfilled.

"Scribblety scratch—can ye no' play in the Gardens wi' the ither bairns?" grumbled Nanny McQumpha to 5-year-old Frossie.

(Dear Nanny! She was still grumbling when she passed on in 1947, aged 88.)

And Papa, home from the City, would shake his head in mild reproof to see the youngest of his brood curled up in the conservatory, writing for dear life, while muffins cooled on the tea table.

Only from brother Charles ("Chummie"), one year her senior, did Frossie ever receive support. Her bedtime ghost stories, he declared, were "most awfully jolly."

My great-grandfather, a Bristol man, was a noted collector of sailors' shanties. I have often thought that some hereditary streak. . . . CICELY FRASER

The day he fell out of the pram was the first he remembered. Parsnip and Lulu muttered in the alcove.

Pottie babykins pottie?

When you wet the bed first it's wet then it's dry. Parsnip laughed but Lulu scowled at him, and the scowl twisted brutally down into the back of his neck festering. On her shoulder he saw the piggie-wiggie greasily pink and fat like . . . but Lulu had gone behind the screen. It choked him at night.

I'll murder the beast.

The room jumped out of the dark. He screamed and guzzled and . . . and. . . . The piggie-wiggie champed at the back of his neck, so he flew up and scribbled Parsnip off the paper. Parsnip laughed over his shoulder.

Ohms watts amperes volts
I don't know witch is watt.

That was the song he sang. He fell out of the pram on the back of his neck festering, and he was eating Lulu. The bell bubbled and cornflour dribbled down his chin. First it was wet then it was dry. Parsnip sneered in with a new strap and he couldn't move in his high chair as he stiffened . . . remembering . . . remembering . . . the back of his neck.

I. F. PARRY

We were very happy at Bide-a-wee: Father, Mother, Anastasia and I. Even now, as I write, the pen drops, forgotten, from my fingers and I see once again the rambling old white house, the spacious lawn, the bird-bath, the monkey puzzle tree and the rambling old stone wall. Anastasia, her long fair hair caressed by the soft rays of the late afternoon sun, is perched on the topmost branch of the monkey puzzle, eating a cream bun and licking her fingers with delight. Hard by the bird-bath, dreaming of the future, lounges a sturdy, intelligent, sensitive lad of eleven years or so. Whose face do I see mirrored in those still waters? Yes, it is I! A stranger now, perhaps, yet somehow dear to my memory.

Ah, Bide-a-wee happy home, little did I foresee how soon I was to venture forth into the world, far from your sheltering walls! Ah, little sister, gentle "Stasie," so soon to fulfil as Wife and Mother the bright promise of those halcyon childhood days!

But I must not anticipate. My father was a remarkable man. My mother was a remarkable woman. I. . . . HENRY WALTER

Company Meeting

DAILY NEWS, LIMITED

PRESS COMMISSION'S REPORT

The annual general meeting of The Daily News, Ltd., was held on July 20 in London.

Mr. Laurence J. Cadbury, the chairman, in the course of his speech, said: Perhaps the most important thing about the first half of 1949 is that circulations were freed on January 3 and from that date all newspapers could print as many copies as they could sell. There was naturally much speculation about the effect freedom would have on circulations. The *News Chronicle* has maintained its sales at a daily average of over 1,600,000 for the first six months, while the *Star* has risen from its pegged figure of 1,074,000 to 1,235,000 in June.

A few weeks ago the Royal Commission on the Press issued its report after two years' work. The Commission makes one positive recommendation, that there should be a General Council of the Press. Naturally the Press will give this proposal serious study, and already the Newspaper Proprietors Association and the Newspaper Society referred it to Committees for examination.

In considering this recommendation, it is well to remember the existing bodies that deal with the Press and its affairs. There are, for example, the two just mentioned, which represent respectively the London national papers and provincial papers, also the Scottish Daily Newspaper Society, the Newsprint Supply Company, the Press Association, Reuters, the Institute of Journalists and the National Union of Journalists.

The important question is to see whether singly or together these associations can deal with all, or at least the most practical, points put forward for attention by the Press Council, such as recruitment and training, establishment of common services, research, a journalists' pension scheme and representation of the Press in its relation with the Government.

While some of the motives that inspired the creation of the Commission were of dubious origin, the public and the Press have to thank its members for a most valuable Report.

The report was adopted.

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